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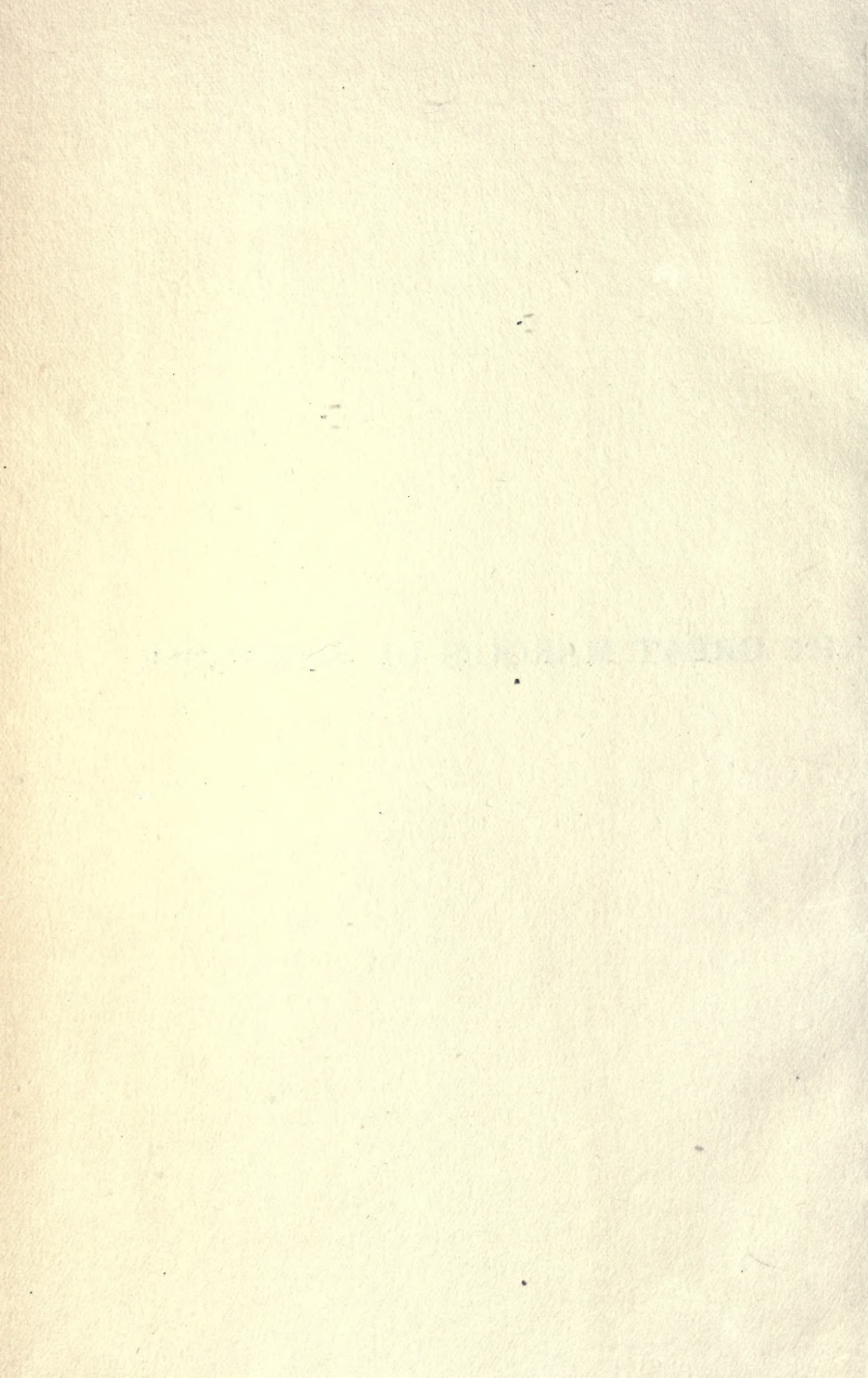








**THE GREAT MARQUIS OF MONTROSE**









Jameson fecit.]

[Frontispiece.

*Frontispiece*



# THE GREAT MARQUIS OF MONTROSE

BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

THE story of "the Troubles" in Scotland has attracted less attention than the history of the Civil War in England, partly because the conflict was on a smaller scale, but still more, perhaps, because the Scottish leaders were, on the whole, far less interesting than the distinguished men who came to the front on both sides in the southern portion of the island. The names of Strafford and Laud, of Pym, Hampden and Cromwell, are familiar to us as household words, and the innate force of character, the clearly defined aims of each and all of them, excite the interest, even when they do not enlist the sympathy of all readers. Scotland was deeply involved, and even led the way in the civil strife, yet it cannot be denied that, north of the Tweed, the great crisis called forth few men of striking eminence.

One man Scotland did produce whose claim to be called great cannot well be disputed, and that man was Montrose—the "great Marquis" of Scottish history. He was recognised in his own day as "one of the most illustrious persons of the age in which he lived,"\* and Cardinal de Retz saw in his greatness of soul a revival of the spirit of the old classic heroes. But he whom Carlyle has called "the Hero Cavalier" was quickly forgotten in the very unheroic age which set in with the Restoration, and later on, the Whig historians of the earlier half of the nineteenth century still further obscured his fame by reproducing for their readers, as a portrait of Montrose, the false and distorted caricature which had been drawn of him by his bitter and unscrupulous enemies, Argyll, Archibald Johnston and Lauderdale.

More than half a century ago, Mr Mark Napier, in a spirit as chivalrous as that of the gallant Grahame, whose fair fame he was defending, devoted himself to the task of clearing the memory of Montrose from the misrepresentations which had gathered round the name of one of the most re-

\* Clarendon.

markable of Scotland's many distinguished sons. With untiring industry and research he gathered together, from public and private archives, a mass of historical and domestic documents which enabled him to construct a complete record of Montrose's life, and to illustrate his opinions from sources whose fairness and veracity could not be doubted. Napier asserts with truth that no one can fully and honestly write a life of his hero without the aid of all he himself has written on the subject, nor without the closest study of the collection of historical documents printed in the two large quarto volumes of his *Memorials of Montrose*, a book which has now become as rare as it is valuable. Napier's *Lives of Montrose*, three in number, besides the *Memorials*, were too bulky, and perhaps also too polemical in tone to be generally read. They were, however, entirely successful in producing the effect at which their author aimed. Since their publication, no writer of repute has ventured to repeat the baseless calumnies which disfigure the pages of Brodie, Laing, and even Hallam.

Several brief sketches of the life of the great Marquis have been published since Napier wrote, and in 1893 an important contribution to the subject was made by Messrs Murdoch and Simpson in their fine quarto edition of the *Deeds of Montrose*, a new and spirited translation of Wishart's *Latin Life*, enriched with a large number of valuable notes, and containing three new chapters which are founded upon the original letters and documents obtained by the editors chiefly from German and Swedish archives. To the editors of this work, as well as to a small volume of *Miscellaneous Papers connected with the Marquis of Montrose and the Civil War*, published by Dr Morland Simpson, and printed for the Scottish History Society in 1893, I am deeply indebted for the light they throw upon the career of Montrose, from the time that he began to take an active part in the King's service till his death.\*

No one since Mr Napier has done more to place Montrose in his true position among the great men of his time than

\* I wish also to thank Dr Morland Simpson for his great personal kindness in revising my MS., and for many suggestions adding point and interest to the story.



Dr S. R. Gardiner, whose well-known political sympathies make his admiration of the royalist leader all the more striking. He approached the subject with no prejudice in favour of the ardent young Scotsman who, though he began his career on the popular side, soon became the most resolute and daring of all the champions of the falling monarchy. But though Dr Gardiner has no sympathy with most of Montrose's convictions, and though he looks upon his political opinions as crude, and his passionate devotion to Charles I. as a weakness and a mistake, he ungrudgingly admits the nobility and greatness of the man, and, with the fairness which is the distinguishing mark of his attitude, he does not shrink from doing full justice to the royalist hero. It is indeed interesting to note how, as the story develops and he becomes better acquainted with Montrose, his appreciation, which, in the earlier volumes, is expressed with considerable limitation, becomes warmer, till at last he surrenders himself unreservedly to the winning charm of Montrose's character.

Gardiner introduces Montrose as one who "when once he had chosen his side, was sure to bear himself like a Paladin of old romance"; as an "idealist" who "went ever straight to the mark, impatient to shake off the schemes of worldly wise politicians and the plots of interested intriguers"; as one whom Nature had marked "for a life of meteoric splendour, to confound and astonish a world, and to leave behind him an inspiration and a name which would outlast the ruin of his hopes." Of the military genius of Montrose the historian speaks with unqualified admiration, ranking him above Cromwell. "On the battle-field," he writes, "Montrose had all Cromwell's promptness in seizing the chances of the strife, together with a versatility in varying his tactics according to the varying resources of the enemy, to which Cromwell could lay no claim, whilst his skill as a strategist was certainly superior to that of his English contemporary."

One more quotation, not this time from the *History*, but from an article in the *Edinburgh Review* \* on "the last campaign of Montrose," will show with what generous and whole-hearted admiration Dr Gardiner can speak of the

\* January 1894.

royalist hero when he has come to the end of the story and is commenting upon its closing scenes.

“Montrose had ended his noble life in triumph on the gallows. The story of his last days has been told by Napier with what in most other cases would be a superfluity of detail. In narrating the close of Montrose’s great career no detail can be superfluous. In his last days no word, no gesture of his has been recorded which his most sensitive admirers would wish to have other than it was. ‘*So stirbt ein Held anbetungsvoll.*’ He never could have been a statesman because he had no eye for the complexity of life. The simplicity of his conceptions did not fit him for the guidance of his nation in the sore straits into which it had fallen. It did something far better than anything the statesman can achieve. It gave to those who are immersed in the struggles of the world an example of one who kept his heart pure and his eye clear for the reception of every truth he was capable of admitting. Great in life, Montrose was even greater in his death.”

But Dr Gardiner has not only given us a fine portrait of Montrose in his great *History*; he brought to light a series of letters and papers \* which throw much light on the last few months of the Marquis’s life. The letters—written by a parliamentary spy—which form the nucleus of the collection, show what a prominent position Montrose occupied in the eyes not only of England and Scotland, but of a great part of Europe. The most interesting of these discoveries is Montrose’s last letter to the young King (*see* page 372), of which “there had been practically no antecedent publication at all.” Of this touching letter Dr Gardiner writes (in the article already referred to) that “if no other line had reached us from Montrose’s hand, this letter would have been sufficient to justify all that his warmest admirers have said of the nobility of his character.”

But if Dr Gardiner did much for Montrose in spite of the difference in their political point of view, Mr Andrew Lang has, within the last few years, in the third volume of his *History of Scotland*, given to the public such a picture of

\* Printed for the Scottish History Society in 1894 under the title of *Charles II. and Scotland in 1650.*

the great Marquis as only a writer in full sympathy with his subject could produce. It is painted by an artist hand with colouring as clear and brilliant as it is true to life, and cannot fail to win fresh admirers for the man whom he describes as "the most sympathetic figure in the whole history of Scotland." \*

Mark Napier's many volumes, Gardiner's great *History*, Murdoch and Simpson's *Deeds of Montrose*, and Lang's *History of Scotland* are too costly and on too large a scale to be accessible to the general public, hence this attempt to give in more popular form the story of Montrose's life as it may now be known with the aid of the additional light thrown upon it in later years.

\* Lang's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 45.





# THE GREAT MARQUIS OF MONTROSE

## CHAPTER I

### BOYHOOD

"I'll give thy harp heroic theme  
And warm thee with a noble name,  
Pour forth the glory of the Græme."

*Lady of the Lake, Canto II.*

TRADITION carries back the story of the gallant Græmes to very remote times, and claims for a chief of the race the honour of making a successful defence against Roman invaders. But the first historical record of the family to which any interest is attached dates from the end of the thirteenth century. One of the first of the Scottish nobility to join William Wallace in his heroic defence of his country against English usurpation was Sir John the Grahame, a man "equally remarkable for wisdom and courage." He became Wallace's bosom friend and confidant, and was killed in the fatal battle of Falkirk, 1298.

In later times the name of Grahame repeatedly found a place in Scottish history, and lands and honours gathered round it, till on the accession of James VI. to the English throne the grandfather of the great Marquis became Viceroy of Scotland. His son, the fourth Earl of Montrose, is said to have been a man of considerable attainments, and though he was of a quiet and domestic disposition, he filled under King James more than one post of importance. This Earl married a daughter of the first Earl of Gowrie, the chief of the Ruthvens—a family whose misfortunes have been celebrated in history and romance. She became the mother of five daughters, but Montrose was her only son. He was born

1612 towards the end of the year 1612, just at the time when the nation was mourning the death of the promising and popular Prince Henry.

When the boy was only six years old his mother died, and after her death his father retired altogether from public life. He possessed houses in four different counties in Scotland, but his favourite home appears to have been Kincardine Castle in Perthshire. The place was destroyed in the civil wars, and only two massive fragments of masonry are still left standing, but the great green mounds of buried ruin, and the remains of an old moat, show the wide extent that was once covered by the walls and towers of the castle, built of a bright grey stone sparkling with a metallic lustre from its imbedded grains of mica. It stood on a slightly elevated plateau, its southern wall rising straight from the edge of a high, thickly wooded bank, which descends abruptly into the glen of Kincardine, where the Ruthven water still ripples with a peaceful murmur round the small grey boulders strewn along its shallow bed. Looking across the wooded glen the south front of Kincardine commanded a lovely prospect of the Ochils, not much more than a mile away, with the bold outlines of Ben Rossie a little to the east. To the north lay the broad, fertile plain of Perthshire, and far away in the blue distance rose the long line of the Grampians, their bold curves and lofty peaks stretching right across the horizon from Benvoirlich to Schiehallion. Those great mountain fastnesses were to prove in times of strife and danger a surer shelter to the Grahame than the strong loop-holed walls of his own castle.

Surrounded by natural beauty which could not fail to leave its impress on an imaginative child, the young Lord James grew up into a strong, active boy, learning fencing and archery, and gaining strength of muscle and swiftness of foot, while he joined in the sports of other young Grahames as strong and spirited as himself. The Grahames were not a clan in the same sense in which the Campbells were, for they were not Highlanders; still the ties of blood relationship were strongly felt among the Scottish families. There was the same sort of wholesome equality between the Earl's son and his companions that there is now among the boys



at a good public school. They were all gentlemen, and the son of the poorest Grahame would have returned to the best of his power an unjust blow from the hand of the young lord. Thus the boy led a healthy out door life, which trained him in endurance and fitted him for the many hardships fate had in store for him.

Before he was eight years old he was often in the saddle, and the careful accounts (still in existence) kept by the blacksmith of Aber-ruthven show that "Lord James's naigs" required frequent shoeing. He was hardly eight when two of his sisters were married—Lilias, the eldest, to Sir John Colquhoun of Luss, and Margaret to Sir Archibald, afterwards Lord Napier of Merchiston, who was through life the wisest of counsellors and the most faithful of friends to his young brother-in-law. The marriage of Lilias proved in the end most unhappy, but at first everything promised well, and Lord James, with his young sisters, spent many happy holidays at Sir John Colquhoun's beautiful seat of Rossthdu on the banks of Loch Lomond.

Rightly to judge of the character and training of Montrose, it is necessary to know something about Lord Napier, the man who of all others had the strongest influence in moulding the opinions and principles of the boy. Lord Napier was the eldest son of the celebrated inventor of logarithms, and was about thirty years old when King James succeeded to the English throne. He became one of that monarch's trusted counsellors in Scottish affairs, and was specially recommended by James to his son and successor, who raised Napier to the peerage early in his reign. Under both kings he held the office of "Treasurer depute" in the Scottish Privy Council, but owing to the selfish intrigues, to the envy and dishonesty of most of the Court officials with whom he had to work, he was glad to give up the place, not many years after Charles's accession. Inheriting large estates in the Lennox and Menteith districts, he did not, like so many needy Scottish nobles, depend upon an official salary, and he was besides of opinion that "the place could never be profitable to a man who had resolved fair and honest dealing." \*

\* Napier's *Memorials of Montrose*, vol. i. p. 91.

Lord Napier was a religious and perfectly upright man, possessed of the strong common sense, the prudence, and the sort of dry humour which are frequently to be found in the best type of Scotchman. Like the majority of his countrymen at that period, he was an intolerant Presbyterian and had a true Scottish horror of the Roman Church; but his kindly disposition and his knowledge of the world prevented his narrowness of opinion on religious subjects from degenerating into that bitter and unloving spirit which gave so dark and repulsive a colouring to much of the Scotch Presbyterianism of the day.

Lord Napier was at least forty when he married Lady Margaret Grahame, and his bride could not have been much more than eighteen, but this disparity of age did not interfere with the happiness of the union, and in one of the autobiographical papers he wrote after her death he described her as "a woman religious, chaste, beautiful, and my chief joy in the world." A portrait of her is still in existence, and represents her with a very fair complexion, bright red hair, and an expression of goodness and modesty in full accord with her husband's description. Montrose was still a boy when he lost this motherly elder sister, but her death did not in any way loosen the tie that bound him to his guardian brother-in-law. Nothing ever disturbed this close mutual affection and esteem, and it is no slight justification of those portions of Montrose's career which have been most misunderstood and misrepresented, that through all he retained the sympathy and approval of Lord Napier.

At the age of twelve Montrose was placed at Glasgow, to prepare for the University, under the care of a tutor—called in those days a pedagogue—whose name was William Forrett. It is noticeable that throughout life Montrose had a wonderful power of winning the warm, unalterable, and often passionate attachment of those who came into close personal contact with him. Master Forrett was no exception to this rule, and he continued faithful to his former pupil through all changes of fortune.

A modest establishment was provided at Glasgow for the young heir of Montrose, and here he led a quiet, studious life under the care of his tutor; but at the end of a year and



a half came a sudden change. The Earl, who was still in the prime of life, fell dangerously ill, and Lord James, hastening home from Glasgow, arrived only in time to close his father's eyes. He remained at Kincardine Castle for eight weeks, in company with a great number of his relations and friends. All that time did it take to accomplish the burial, and a very costly affair it was, in which it seems there was as much feasting as mourning, though it can hardly be doubted that the orphan boy, whose after history shows him to have been possessed of unusual intensity of feeling, must have been sorrowful and lonely amidst all the festive company.

He returned no more to his "Pedagog," but towards the end of January 1627—being just fourteen—he became a student at St Andrews. An ancestor of his own, Robert de Monte Rosarum, was one of the earliest founders, and the university was already more than 200 years old when the boy Earl, who was destined to rank high among her many famous alumni, entered into residence at St Salvator's College. Some of his possessions, among them a gilded sword, and some other gay decorations, which might be supposed to be just the things likely to be most precious to a boy of his age, were left in charge of the faithful ex-tutor. His books were brought to his college rooms, and carefully placed in a cabinet by Master Forrett, in presence of the young Earl himself and one of his curators, or guardians. In those days books were still few, and therefore valuable, and it is the more remarkable that the small library should have contained, besides the classical works in use at the university, books on *Natural History*, and on the *Orders of Knighthood*, a newly published life of *Mary Queen of Scots*, and Fairfax's translation of *Tasso*, with an introductory life of *Godfrey de Bulloigne*.

But the most precious of all his literary treasures, the one thing which the young lord must himself convey to St Andrews, was Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, the ponderous folio edition that had appeared soon after Montrose's birth. This famous work, the composition of which had beguiled the solitary hours of Sir Walter's long imprisonment, was written in pure and vigorous English.



## 6 THE MARQUIS OF MONTROSE

Its clear, spirited narrative was enriched by the philosophical opinions and reflections suggested to Raleigh's mind by his own long and varied experience, and something of the bold adventurous character of the writer could hardly fail to find a sympathetic echo in a reader so eager and imaginative as the boy Montrose.

During the two years that he remained at St Andrews the young Earl acquired a lasting love for classical literature, and often in the troubled years of his after life his mind reverted with pleasure to the peaceful studies of his boyhood. These studies were pleasantly diversified by such amusements as hunting, hawking, archery and golf, and Montrose threw himself with characteristic ardour into these sports. He held the challenge arrow for archery at St Andrews, where an old silver medal attached to a silver arrow, and bearing his name and arms, is still carefully preserved. The date is 1628, his second year at college.

In the spring of this year he had a serious illness, almost the only one of which there is any trace to be found in his whole life, for he had an excellent constitution, and was always remarkable for his great powers of physical endurance. At this time, however, two physicians were in attendance upon him for several weeks, and a barber was sent for to shave off his bonny brown hair. The doctors did not keep their patient upon starvation diet, for in some minute accounts still existing there is a long list of "capons and veel's feet, whey, possets, aleberry and claret, muirfowl and pigeons," which were supplied for the use of the invalid.

This illness was followed by a long summer holiday, spent partly on the lovely shores of Loch Lomond at Luss, the house of his sister Lilius. Katherine and Beatrix, the two youngest of the late Earl's family, had been adopted by Lady Lilius and her husband, so that here the boy came as to a home, and it requires no great stretch of imagination to picture the many pleasant rambles he would have with his two young sisters among the romantic hills which surround the fairest of Scottish lakes. Sometimes he played the part of host himself, and on one occasion he entertained all his sisters, with many other guests, at Kincardine Castle for several days. As many as eighteen sat down to dinner,

not at seven or eight in the evening, but at noon, or soon after. The difference between modern and ancient usage is, however, more nominal than real, for the supper, which was served at about the same hour as a modern late dinner, was an important and substantial meal. This merry gathering in Perthshire must have resembled many another in which Montrose took a share. The old castle was filled to overflowing, for the guests, many of whom came from a distance, were accompanied by numerous retainers.

When not staying with his married sisters the young Earl spent his holidays in riding rapidly about from one country house to another, visiting his curators and his many connections amongst the Scottish nobility. At Cumbernauld, Kinnaird, Glamis, Angus, Claverhouse, Balgoun, and many other great houses, he was a frequent and welcome guest. Wherever he went he showered largesse with a liberal hand. The poor were never forgotten, and "piperers," "violin" and other musicians did not fail to benefit by his arrival. The minute diary of accounts kept by Montrose's purse-master,\* which throws much light upon his early life, also gives evidence of the careful attention he paid to his religious duties. He appears to have been very regular in his attendance at church and communion, and his small library contained several devotional books.

During his last year at college he paid a visit to Archbishop Spottiswood, and it is more than probable that from this early period dated his acquaintance with the Archbishop's son Robert—afterwards known as "the good Lord President"—who became one of Montrose's most faithful and dearly loved friends.

It is pleasant, before taking leave of the young Earl's brilliant and almost unclouded boyhood, to picture him as he looked in those happy holiday times in his grey suit of English cloth, or his green camlet, attended by his two pages clad in red, his bright, happy face, boundless energy, and gentle manners winning favour from high and low.

In a life so full from beginning to end of the elements of romance, it is unquestionably disappointing to find so little

\* See Appendix to Part II. of Napier's *Memorials of Montrose*, where "Maister John Lambye's compts." from April 1628 to December 1629 are printed in full.



trace of the romance of all romances—woman's love; but it may reasonably be supposed that his early marriage at seventeen to Magdalen, the youngest of Lord Carnegie's six daughters, was a love match. Kinnaird Castle, the chief seat of Lord Carnegie (who not long afterwards became Earl of Southesk), is situated near Old Montrose, and is not very far from St Andrews. It appears probable that the boy  
**1629** Earl was on intimate terms with this large family of girls, and that the youngest of them looked with shy favour upon the youthful cavalier whose high spirit and many accomplishments had already marked him out as one of the most promising among the young scions of Scottish nobility. As Montrose, through life, proved himself a man who acted upon his own opinions and made his own choice, it may fairly be concluded that Magdalen Carnegie won the steadfast affection of his true and tender heart. Little is known about the wooing, but "the poor at the gate of Kinnaird" received many an alms from the young lover during the autumn of 1629.

The week before the marriage he rode to Aberdeen to have his portrait taken by Jameson, who has been called the Vandyke of Scotland. The young Earl was received with great honour by the townspeople. They made a grand feast, rang the bells of the college, and presented him with the freedom of Aberdeen. The artist required only two or three sittings, and on the third day Montrose rode off to Arbuthnot, the home of one of the married daughters of Kinnaird. He then returned to his house of Old Montrose for a day or two, and on Tuesday, the 10th of November, was married to his girl-bride in the parish church of Kinnaird. The wedding over, they returned straight to Kinnaird Castle, where, by the articles of the marriage treaty, they were to reside for the four years that would elapse before the bridegroom came of age.

Jameson's portrait arrived at Kinnaird before the end of the honeymoon, as a present to the young Countess from Grahame of Morphie, one of her husband's curators. The portrait still hangs in the castle, and shows a spirited boy, fair complexioned, with well-formed features and clear, well-opened grey eyes. The luxuriant brown hair, parted



at the side, lies smoothly over the unruffled brow, clustering in loose short curls round the boy's neck, and on the falling ruff edged with delicate lace. The rich olive velvet doublet is profusely slashed with white satin, and every seam and edge is trimmed with gold. There is a singular charm about this bright, sweet-tempered young face, over which coming events had as yet cast no shadow.

Certainly no young nobleman in the kingdom had brighter prospects for his opening life. His large estates were in the most prosperous condition. He was the head of one of the oldest and most influential houses in Scotland. His unusual talents and force of character, united to a persuasive charm in look and manner, made him, even at that early age, prominent amongst the young nobility of Scotland, and everything seemed to promise a long course of prosperity to the fortunate representative of the house of Grahame. But he had already begun to dream of something higher than mere prosperity. The great deeds of the old heroes had stirred his imagination and fired him with the resolve to live a noble life. On a leaf of his *Cæsar* he had written:

"Though Cæsar's paragon I cannot be,  
Yet shall I soar in thought as high as he."

And on his copy of *Quintus Curtius* he had noted down these lines:

"As Philip's noble son did still disdain  
All but the dear applause of merited fame,  
And nothing harboured in that lofty brain  
But how to conquer an eternal name,  
So great attempts, heroic ventures shall  
Advance my fortunes, or renown my fall."

In these boyish aspirations may be found the germ of the high ideal that moulded all Montrose's after life, an ideal which, modified and developed by the loftier spiritual aims of Christianity, raised him above the spirit of his age, and kept always before his eyes a standard of life and achievement seldom understood or even dreamed of by most of the leaders in that stirring time.

## CHAPTER II

### THREE YEARS ON THE CONTINENT

"Are not these woods  
More free than the envious Court?"

*As You Like It.*

**1629-1636** AFTER his marriage Montrose lived at Kinnaird Castle and went on with his interrupted studies. Two sons, William and James, were born to him before he attained his majority.

In the meantime a sad tragedy was going on in the house of Sir John Colquhoun of Luss, the husband of the Earl's eldest sister, Lilius. In September 1631 this man, who had a large family of children, and whose wife was still living, disappeared from his home, carrying off with him his unfortunate sister-in-law, Lady Katherine Grahame, who was quite a young girl, and who had been brought up almost from her infancy as an adopted child in his house. He was accompanied in his flight by a German servant named Carlippis, who was suspected by the neighbours of dealing in magic, an art implicitly believed in at that time by persons of the highest standing and education. It was discovered that the wicked guardian and brother-in-law had for a long time been trying to destroy the innocence of the unhappy young lady, and an indictment was drawn up accusing him and Carlippis of necromancy and seduction, and summoning him to appear to answer for his crimes.

The charge against him, framed by Sir Thomas Hope, the Lord Advocate—himself a firm believer in every kind of supernatural agency—is very curious, and illustrates the gross credulity of the age. In the indictment it is affirmed that Sir John, being unable to win Lady Katherine's favour, "thereupon addressed himself to certain witches and sorcerers, and consulted and dealt with them for charms and incantations, and, namely, with the said Thomas Carlippis, whom he kept and used as his ordinary servant, and procured from him, being a necromancer, certain philtra or poisons of love, or poisonable and enchanted tokens of love,



especially a jewell of gold, set with divers pretious diamonds or rubies, which was poisoned or intoxicat by the said necromancer." The charge then goes on to attribute all the evil that followed to the influence of these charms and intoxicat jewels, and to pronounce punishment of death against both master and servant.\* As both had fled the country, sentence of outlawry was proclaimed against them at the Market Cross of Edinburgh.

The unhappy Lady Katherine disappeared entirely, and, as far as can be ascertained, was never more heard of. Luss was excommunicated, and did not reappear in Scotland till sixteen years later, when he was pardoned both by Kirk and State—perhaps all the more readily because Montrose had by that time become an object of intense hatred to the covenanting Government which ruled the realm.

When the news of the frightful crime committed by his brother-in-law came to Montrose, living happily with his wife and little son at Kinnaird, he was barely nineteen, and for the moment every hope and prospect of happiness for the future must have seemed, to his youthful inexperience, irretrievably destroyed. The despair of the deserted Lillas, the utter loss of the fair young sister who had been the companion and playmate of his boyhood, and the stain upon the honour of his house, were enough to crush the stoutest heart and the most buoyant spirit. The mystery, too, which enveloped the whole story, if it in some measure diminished the shame of the supposed victim of necromantic arts, added new horror to the crime.

This terrible blow seemed all the heavier because it fell at a time when the young Earl was full of the brightest anticipations of the immediate future. The Coronation of Charles I. in Scotland was to take place in June 1633, and Montrose looked forward to taking his position on that occasion among the nobles of the land, and to a personal introduction to his Sovereign. He, with his sanguine disposition and vivid imagination, must often have pictured to himself beforehand that happy and important event, and many a brilliant air-built castle must have risen upon so promising a foundation. That he was expected to be present and to form part of the

\* *Memorials of Montrose*, vol. i. p. 91.



royal pageant is shown by a poem composed in advance, for the occasion of the Coronation, by William Lithgow, a writer of some repute in his day. After a short enumeration of some of the principal nobles who were really present, Montrose is dwelt on at considerable length as—

“That hopeful youth, the young Lord Grahame,  
James, Earle of Montarose, whose warlike name  
Sprung from redoubted worth, made manhood try  
Their matchless deeds in unmatched chivalry—

Leaving their root, the stamp of fiddè truth,  
To be inherent in this noble youth ;  
Whose hearts, whose hands, whose swords, whose deeds, whose fame  
Made Mars for valour canonize the Grahame.”

The sentence of outlawry on Colquhoun was pronounced in January 1633, and by the time that the nobles were gathering for the Coronation ceremony Montrose had already left Scotland. It was usual for young men of wealth and high position to perfect their education by spending some considerable time in foreign courts and countries, where they were able to rub off those local tinges of speech and manner which, two or three hundred years ago, clung even to the most highly educated men and women. Scotsmen of the highest rank spoke in those days as broad a dialect as any Lowland peasant would use now, though since the beginning of King James's reign a certain advance had been made in this respect, owing to the constant communication which had set in between the English and Scottish nobility.

It can hardly be doubted that Montrose set out on his travels earlier than he would otherwise have done, in the hope of finding, or perhaps of avenging, his lost sister. Of his success or failure in discovering her there is no record, but the melancholy quest must have thrown a deep shadow over the first part of his life abroad.

A little French Bible, acquired by Montrose on his early travels, may still be seen in the quaint, old-world library at Innerpeffray,\* on the banks of the Earn, and it brings us wonderfully near to him. This small, dark book, with the light inside, he touched with his hands; and we know, as certainly, that the light of it touched his spirit. Like a true

\* Founded by David, Lord Madertie, the husband of Montrose's favourite sister, Lady Beatrix.

friend it is entrusted with the scraps of literature that woke sympathetic echoes in Montrose's heart—straws on a strong current, and all flowing one way:—

"La Vita passa, la Morte viene :  
Beato colui chi havra fatto bene." \*

"Honor mihi vità potior." †

"Ardito e presto." ‡

"Aut solvam, aut diruam." §

The faded ink holds an unquenchable spirit, with no more of earthly stain than serves to make it visible to our eyes. Turning over the leaf we seem to find ourselves caught in a quiet hour with Montrose when his pen could find leisure to occupy itself with tracing a quaint device of J. M. and E. (James, Earl of Montrose) set above thorns, scattered round with roses and transfixed with a cross. Underneath he wrote, "Non crescunt sine spinis,"|| and below that, as if in explanation, "Pro jucundis, aptissima quoque Deus dat,"¶ lines full of a spirit that trouble cannot harm, and followed by the firmest and clearest of the four significantly fine signatures that adorn the three pages. Even the spare space on the title-page contributes to these treasures stored in a treasure. That the book was his companion when other books were wanting, the mistake of a word in a line quoted from Horace's noblest ode seems to show: "Si *totus* (for *fractus*) illabitur orbis. . . ."

For three years he travelled on the Continent, spending a large portion of his time in France and Italy, and studying the "art militaire." But while he gave due attention to those mathematical studies which were accounted the basis of warlike science, his great object and interest was—as one who appears to have followed him during part of his travels records—"to read men, and the actions of great men." \*\* He made good use of his opportunities, for nothing was more remarkable in those short but brilliant campaigns of his in after years than the insight into character which enabled him always to make the best and most effective use of the men under his command.

\* Life passes away, Death comes ; Blessed he who shall have done the right.

† I prefer honour to life.

‡ Daring and swift.

§ If I cannot untie I will cut the knot.

|| They do not grow without thorns.

¶ Instead of pleasant things, God gives those which are most fitting for us.

\*\* Sydserf. See *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 207.



One of his travelling companions was the Earl of Denbigh, a brother-in-law of the Marquis of Hamilton, but if the two young men had any sympathies in common at this time they soon became widely separated, and they took opposite sides in the great civil struggle. In the spring of 1635 Montrose was in Rome, and in company with the Earl of Angus (afterwards Marquis of Douglas) and some other Scotsmen of rank he paid a visit to the English college in that city, and was honourably entertained by the brothers of the community in their refectory. Such experiences naturally weakened the prejudices prevalent at that period among Protestant Scotsmen, and promoted a wider human sympathy than was possible to most of Montrose's fellow-countrymen. His active and inquiring mind found so much of interest in this wandering life that he had decided upon extending his travels to the East, when domestic affairs, of the nature of which no record remains, summoned him home.

Several contemporary verbal portraits of Montrose give us a fairly vivid idea of what he looked like at this time of his life. "He was of middle stature and most exquisitely proportioned limbs; his hair of a light chestnut, his complexion betwixt pale and ruddy, his eye most penetrating, though inclining to grey; his nose rather aquiline than otherwise." Another writer says: "He was a man of very princely carriage and excellent address, which made him to be used by all princes for the most part with the greatest familiarity. He was a complete horseman and had a singular grace in riding."

Bishop Burnet, who was prejudiced against him as the opponent of his own special hero, the Marquis of Hamilton, takes a different view, and speaks of the young Earl as "a young man well learned, who had travelled, but had taken upon him the part of a hero too much, and lived as in a romance, for his whole manner was stately to affectation."

Such from friend and foe is the picture of Montrose when, at the age of twenty-three, he returned from abroad, and on his way home presented himself at the Court of his Sovereign. By Lord Napier he had been trained to feel the warmest personal loyalty towards King Charles, and he had every reason to expect a kindly reception from a prince who was not only his own countryman but almost his kinsman.



Unfortunately for himself and for Charles, Montrose's youthful enthusiasm was doomed for the present to disappointment. The Marquis of Hamilton was a great favourite at Court, and to him, as a friend and fellow-countryman, Montrose stated his wish to "put himself into the King's service." But Hamilton, who did not possess Montrose's natural personal advantages, had no wish to introduce at Court a possible rival, and this graceful, accomplished youth, warm of heart and straightforward of purpose, seemed to him a secret enemy who might win from himself the King's over-trusting love. Accordingly, while he professed his earnest desire to further the young Earl's wishes, he added that the King was wholly given up to the English, that he discountenanced and slighted his own countrymen, and that he wished to reduce Scotland to the state of a mere province. As for himself, he said, but for the hope of doing his country some small service, he would not remain where he was a day longer, so many were the indignities put upon him.

"This done," says the chronicler, Heylin, "he repairs to the King, tells him of the Earl's return from France, and of his purpose to attend him at the time appointed, but that he was so powerful, so popular, and of such esteem among the Scots, by reason of an old descent from the royal family, that if he were not nipped in the bud, as we used to say, he might endanger the King's interest and affairs in Scotland."

Hamilton's scheming was perfectly successful. When Montrose was introduced to the royal presence King Charles received him with a stately coldness of manner that was enough to chill the most ardent loyalty, and he seemed quite to have forgotten the services which the boy's father and grandfather had rendered to himself and to King James; services to which it would have been only natural to refer upon an occasion like this. Montrose was deeply disappointed and hurt. Knowing that he had never given cause for offence he was convinced that the King's evident coldness towards him was intended as a slight to his nationality, and he was too proud to present himself a second time where he was not welcome. He left London at once and returned home to his wife and children, to live for some time in undisturbed quiet in one of his country houses.

## CHAPTER III

### ORIGIN OF THE TROUBLES

"Perilous is sweeping change ; all chance unsound."

WORDSWORTH.

**1636** IF Montrose sought to be introduced to the King with any intention of taking up his residence at Court, it was fortunate that such a project should be at once nipped in the bud. The King indeed was capable of inspiring with the warmest affection and respect those who knew him well, but he was surrounded by unprincipled and intriguing courtiers. These resented nothing so much as the presence of an honest man, and Charles, though he could appreciate faithfulness, was not strong enough to protect those who would have served him truly. Lord Napier, Montrose's brother-in-law and guardian, had been for many years a Privy Councillor, and he has left some curious MS. records of his personal experiences, which throw much light on the practices of the Scottish courtiers chiefly responsible for the ordering of their country's affairs.

The Scottish people, though they at first rejoiced in the strange turn of fate which enabled them to give a King of their own to reign over their old enemies the English, soon felt the inconvenience of being ruled by an absentee monarch, and found cause to lament that there was no longer a Court at Edinburgh. They were also jealously afraid of being brought in any way under the sway of English laws and customs. In deference to this national jealousy, perhaps even sharing it himself, Charles conducted the affairs of his native country entirely through his Scottish Privy Council, and his English subjects, as a rule, took no interest in the affairs of the sister kingdom. No mention of Scottish matters was to be found in the meagre newspapers of the earlier part of Charles's



reign, though news from France, Holland, Poland and other continental nations was freely introduced.

Thus, uncontrolled by public opinion, the little knot of noblemen who composed the Scottish Privy Council used their position to advance their private interests and fortunes, caring little for the King's honour or their country's welfare. Lord Napier, who had been declared by King James—himself a shrewd judge of character—to be a man “free of partiality or any factious humour,” resigned his offices in the early part of Charles's reign, and retired with an unblemished character, after struggling long in vain against the dishonest and selfish schemes of his fellow-officials.

He describes in a few strong, quaint words the condition of the Court during this period of apparent quiet and prosperity. “The Court,” he says, “was full of factions, calumnies and aspersions, His Majesty's just and gracious inclinations abused by misinformation, his ears blocked up and beleaguered that truth could not approach them,” his dishonest servants “so bold in consideration of their leagues that they did not stick to falsify the King's hand, surreptitiously to steal His Majesty's superscriptions, and to frame letters contrary to his meaning, and many other things of this kind.” Napier goes on to illustrate these general statements by facts from his own personal experience, and in the instances that he relates nothing is more striking than the King's fairness and desire to do justice. But it is evident that he was too lenient to transgressors and too easily deceived. These sketches behind the scenes of Court life suggest explanations of many perplexing facts which have thrown discredit upon Charles. It is clear that Lord Napier, who had a strong sense of honour and excellent opportunities for forming his opinion, unreservedly believed in the King's honesty of purpose and in his sincere endeavour to do what he believed to be best for the welfare of his subjects.

In such a Court Montrose could have found no fitting place, but the chilling reception which the King had given him had this evil result. It sent him back to Scotland under the impression that Charles felt coldly towards his native country, and might therefore be fairly suspected of neglecting or misjudging her interests. This impression could not



fail to throw Montrose into sympathy with the national discontent, which from various causes was widely spread in Scotland in 1636, the year of his return home.

There was no outward sign of disaffection at this time. Though life and property were not very safe in some parts of the Highlands the country was in general prosperous, and the people were apparently contented. Yet thoughtful men could hear faint mutterings which indicated that the long calm was at an end and that a terrible storm was about to burst upon the devoted kingdom; such a storm as should put buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, out of men's heads for a while, and force them to think of something greater than their petty, personal interests.

In England disaffection had spread chiefly among the middle classes. They had increased in importance since the Tudor kings had curtailed the power and influence of the nobles, and every year they became less willing to submit to that arbitrary use of the royal prerogative to which King Charles, following the example of his immediate predecessors, resorted without hesitation whenever the occasion seemed to require it. In Scotland the nobles retained more of their old power and semi-independent position, and without their leadership the people could do little.

Charles had deeply alienated many of the Scottish aristocracy by an attempt to revoke grants of tithe which had been made to laymen at the Reformation. This measure met with such violent opposition that it was abandoned, but the King succeeded in passing a scheme to obtain a partial surrender of the tithes under certain conditions, and he tried hard to bring about such a readjustment of the laws as should protect the tenants of land from the oppressions of the lay tithe-holders or titulars, as they are still called. The King's chief aims in this matter were to vindicate the rights of tenants, to obtain out of Church property sufficient maintenance for the Church, and to found schools and hospitals, which were much needed in Scotland. But owing to the underhand dealing of those who professed to serve the King, and to the private opposition of interested parties, the project proceeded but slowly, and the nobles were able by degrees to enlist popular sympathy on their side. For the

tithe revocation was only part of a much larger scheme, a scheme which was in itself offensive to a considerable majority of the Scottish people.

This great scheme upon which Charles had set his heart was to bring about uniformity of religion in the two kingdoms. The Reformation had been carried out in a much rougher and less temperate manner in Scotland than in England, and was based upon a far more intensely anti-papal feeling. Clarendon's assertion that the whole religion of the Scotch consisted in "an entire detestation of popery; in believing the Pope to be Antichrist, and in hating perfectly the persons of all papists," was not altogether without foundation. It must not be supposed, however, that in 1636 the churches of England and Scotland appeared, in external form and government, so unlike each other as to make the project of assimilation seem very difficult. Though the tendencies of the Scottish Reformers were from the first strongly democratic, they had consented to a nominal Episcopacy, and there was a considerable party, even among the clergy, to whom the uncompromising Presbyterianism of Knox and Melville was distasteful. All that seemed necessary in the eyes of King Charles and his pious but narrow-minded adviser, Archbishop Laud, to bring the Church of Scotland into harmony with the English model, was to obtain sufficient revenues with a better position for the bishops, and to substitute an acknowledged formulary like the English Liturgy for the partially extempore services in use among the northern Presbyters.

In this contemplated change there was no violent and destructive revolution, like that which the Scottish Presbyterians a few years later attempted to force upon England—the larger and more civilized country. It was a constructive plan, not intended to destroy or overthrow any existing institution, and though any royal interference with national religion appears in the light of the twentieth century absolutely unjustifiable, it should be remembered that in those intolerant days there were very few who could believe sincerely and earnestly in any kind of religion without believing also that everybody else must, for their soul's salvation, be brought to hold the same creed and conform to the



same outward practices as themselves. But however unreasonable it may be to blame Charles's intentions in the matter, nothing can be said for the manner in which he sought to carry them out.

Before the end of 1636 the King's measures were far advanced. He had instructed some of the Scottish Bishops to draw up a book of prayers and canons for their Church. The English book, he had been told, would be looked upon with jealousy, simply because it was English. He had been led to believe, by those who should have known the truth, that there would be little opposition to these innovations, and that only a few factious ministers would seriously bestir themselves to resist his wishes. The mistake soon became apparent. The canons, published a whole year before the Service Book was ready, were received with general disapprobation, and being imposed upon the nation without the formal assent of Parliament, or of the General Assembly of the Church, they were easily made use of to raise and foment discontent among the people by the nobles who feared for their tithes, and by those ministers who hated Bishops. It was whispered, too, that the new Service Book was likely, under the supervision of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to go farther than the English book in the direction of pre-Reformation usage and doctrine. The event proved that these suspicions were correct.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE COVENANT

"Tell men of high condition  
That rule affairs of State,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice only hate,  
And if they once reply,  
Then give them all the lye."  
*The Soul's Errand, 1598.*

THE malcontents made such good use of their opportunities **1637** that when the new Service Book was ordered by the King to be introduced into the Scottish churches in the summer of 1637 they were prepared for effective resistance. They began by calling the women to their aid. Two ministers, Mr Alexander Henderson and Mr David Dickson, met Lord Balmerino and Sir Thomas Hope (the King's Advocate) "at the house of one Nicholas Balfour, with Eupham Henderson, Bethia and Elspa Craig, and several other matrons, and recommended to them that they and their adherents should give the first affront to that book, assuring them that men should afterwards take it out of their hands." \* By their adherents were meant the serving-maids who, according to Baillie, the zealous chronicler of the Covenant, "incontinent began such a tumult as was never heard of since the Reformation in our nation."

When the Dean, in accordance with the royal commands, began to read the Service in St Giles's Church, Edinburgh, books, stools and other missiles were flung at his head, and the sacred edifice became the scene of a disgraceful uproar. Many of the rioters were driven out, but they broke the windows and battered the door, and in the end the officiating clergy escaped with difficulty from the fury of the mob. The same scenes of violence took place in other towns, and Baillie wrote that in Glasgow the tumult was so great "that

\* *Baillie's Letters.*

it was not thought meet to search either the plotters or actors of it, for numbers of the best quality would have been found guilty."

This insurrection of women was not openly avowed by its authors. Sir Thomas Hope—himself one of the contrivers of it—signed the report of the Privy Council, in which the affair was described as "that barbarous tumult, occasioned, for anything we can learn as yet, by a number of base and rascally people." This and other reports which reached the King's ears did not and could not convey the impression of a grand outbreak of insulted national feeling, and he sent fresh orders to proceed at once with the use of the service he had appointed. But by the time these orders arrived in Edinburgh the bishops, and those among the clergy who supported them, had been obliged to leave the town or to hide themselves.

The "men of high condition" who were behind the scenes in this popular demonstration did not allow the enthusiasm of their followers to flag. Petitions against the Prayer Book flowed in upon the Privy Council, and in September a Convention was held (with the private approval of the King's Advocate), in which many well-known clergymen and noblemen took part. Before they separated some of the most eloquent and enthusiastic of the clergy were chosen to push forward the cause in the appointed districts. Something more than merely popular or pulpit oratory was expected of them, for they were especially directed to bring in as many of the leading noblemen and gentry as possible, and it was hoped that by this means an imposing demonstration might be made in November. One of these clerical delegates, Robert Murray of Methven, undertook to conduct the agitation in the counties of Perth and Stirling, and it was his task to prevail upon Montrose to support the Cause.\*

The Earl was at this time close upon twenty-five years of age, and the energy and force of character which had distinguished him since boyhood now marked him out as a desirable leader in a difficult and dangerous enterprise. He had as yet taken no part in public affairs, but Edinburgh was within a day's ride of Kincardine Castle, and it may be safely

\* *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 230.



assumed that since his return he had watched with deep and painful interest the dangers that threatened the peace and prosperity of his country. Lord Napier, whose long political experience enabled him to understand the course and bearing of events better than could a younger man, was his constant companion and friend, and when the emissary of the Kirk came to plead for the imperilled liberties of Church and State, doubtless he found both noblemen well informed on the subject of the late disturbances.

Montrose shared the strong feeling of his fellow-countrymen against King Charles's policy of placing the new Bishops in offices of civil government. This feeling had been strengthened by the injudicious use which some of the prelates had made of their authority, and by the accusations brought against them of persecuting those amongst the clergy who did not agree with them in religious opinion. For the King, under the guidance of Archbishop Laud, had in almost every case conferred the Scottish sees upon men who held what would now be called High Church views, and their doctrines were even less acceptable to the majority of the nation than their position as "lords over God's heritage." Lord Napier, who like most of the strong Presbyterians was Calvinistic in his opinions, looked upon their preaching as "the quintessence of Popery." His pupil, Montrose, possessed a more tolerant nature, and three years of foreign travel had helped to widen his views on religious as well as on political subjects. But his experience at Court had already inclined him to suspect the King of a disposition to slight the feelings of his Scottish subjects, and the illegal attempt to force a form of prayer, copied from an English model, upon the unwilling Kirk roused in him a glow of patriotic fervour which prepared him to lend a willing ear to almost any measures of national resistance to the royal policy.

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that any great exercise of Robert Murray's eloquence was needed to convince Montrose that it was his duty to come to the front, and in concert with other leading men to uphold, by every legitimate means in his power, the constitutional rights of Kirk and Country. No proposal was made that could shock the most sensitive loyalty. It was indeed necessary to protest against



the arbitrary and ill-judged measures which were supposed to have caused the present disturbances; but the English Archbishop, rather than the King, was blamed for what had taken place, and it did not seem unreasonable to hope that the voice of the nation, if only it were loud and distinct, might prevail against the advice of evil counsellors close to the King's ear.

The arguments of Robert Murray were powerfully seconded by the influence and persuasive eloquence of the Earl of Rothes, a thorough man of the world, clever and unscrupulous; and Montrose left his home to defend, as he believed, the religion and liberties of his country. It is said that the prelates and their party were greatly disquieted when they heard that he had joined their opponents, but—as will be seen—he proved a doubtful gain to the party of the Kirk, for his resolute honesty was in the way, or, as Baillie retrospectively wrote five years later, “his more than ordinary and evil pride made him very hard to be guided”: to be guided, that is, in the crooked ways which the extreme covenanting party too often pursued.

The clerical agitation which was carried on in every part of Scotland produced so great an effect that before the 15th of November, the day appointed for the great Convention, Edinburgh was crowded with men of position and influence, who had hurried up to the capital from their distant homes to protest against the introduction of Popery into the Church. “Popery and Prelacy” was a cleverly devised cry with which to rouse the intensely Protestant people of Scotland. The better educated among them knew that the two things were distinct and had no necessary connection with each other, but they were not left to the cool exercise of their judgment. On the contrary they were worked up to a high pitch of excitement by the fervid eloquence of political preachers who took for their text two assertions, either of which, if true, was enough to anger and alarm a less self-willed race than were these sturdy Scotsmen.

The King, it was said, had attempted, under the influence of his Popish Queen and of the English Primate (who was a papist at heart) to overturn the Protestant faith of Scotland by introducing a Mass-book into the worship of the

Kirk and by raising the bishops to the power and position held by prelates in the Communion of Rome. All this, it was asserted, had been illegally forced upon the country without the consent of Parliament or the advice of the Scottish Privy Council. If these statements had been falsehoods pure and simple all the eloquence and subtlety in the world would have failed to make them the lever of a great rebellion, but there was, unfortunately, enough truth in them to give an appearance of patriotism and duty to the stirring appeals of zealous speakers who urged their countrymen to make a firm stand for the Religion and Liberties of Scotland.

Such a meeting as this of the 15th of November was, according to the ideas of those times, seditious and illegal, and a faint protest to this effect was made by one member of the Privy Council; but the advocate, Sir Thomas Hope, not only declared the Convention to be perfectly legal, but even sanctioned the appointment of a standing committee of sixteen who were to represent, in equal proportion, the nobles, the gentry, the burgesses and the clergy, and to take such measures as they thought best in defence of the menaced independence of the Kirk. The committee was divided into four "Tables," each consisting of four representatives, and Montrose was elected one of the four nobles. Elected to the same Table were Lord Lindsay of the Byres, an old college companion of his, and Rothes and Loudon. Sir George Stirling of Keir, who had married Montrose's niece, Margaret Napier, and who was from first to last one of his most faithful friends, was a member of the second Table.

The fears of the people being by this time sufficiently worked upon, the secret leaders of the party were ready with a device which proved a most powerful instrument against the existing Government, and succeeded beyond their fondest expectations.

Fifty years earlier, when both England and Scotland were awaiting in fear and trembling the attack of the Spanish Armada, which was looked upon by friends and foes as a crusade against Protestantism, the Scottish King and nation had joined in taking a solemn Oath and Covenant to stand by each other in support of the reformed religion, and to resist to the death the errors of Popery, which Philip of Spain



wished to force upon them. This Covenant had been renewed more than once during James's reign, and it was now again brought forward. "Our religion and liberties are in danger," cried the spokesman of the Kirk, "let us renew the Covenant which stood our fathers in good stead, and promise once more as a nation to stand firm, man to man, in defence of our Faith."

The proposal seemed innocent enough. It did not suggest any idea of disloyalty, and it offered an outlet to the passionate enthusiasm which, under the fostering hands of nobles and clergy, had flamed up in the hearts of the people of the Lowlands during the last few months. But though it professed to be merely the renewal of a loyal and patriotic bond, the whole character of this new Covenant was altered by the insertion in it of a clause extending the application of every violent expression used in the old Confession against "Papistry" and "the Roman Antichrist" to the Episcopal usages that had prevailed in Scotland since 1610. Yet there was nothing necessarily disloyal in the strongly worded determination to resist "all these contrary errors and corruptions to the utmost of that power that God hath put into our hands all the days of our life," and the following passage was well calculated to blind many of those who signed it to the ulterior designs of some of its contrivers: "We declare before God and men that we have no intention nor desire to attempt anything that may turn to the dishonour of God or the diminution of the King's greatness and authority; but on the contrary we promise and swear that we shall to the utmost of our power, with our means and lives, stand to the defence of our dread Sovereign the King's Majesty, his person and authority, in the defence and preservation of the aforesaid true religion, liberties and laws of the kingdom."

In the month of February 1638 the Covenant in its new form was ready for signature, and another great meeting was called in Edinburgh. Then followed a scene of religious and political excitement such as had not been witnessed in Scotland within the memory of living man.

The new Covenant, brought with much solemnity to the old Church of Greyfriars, was read out to the excited crowd, which filled every corner of the building. Lord Loudon



made a long speech in praise of their national Oath, old and yet new, and as his persuasive words flowed on the thronging people grew more and more eager to set their hands to that sheet of parchment which was to accomplish such great things. The speech was succeeded by an impassioned prayer from Mr Alexander Henderson, one of the most eloquent of the Kirk's ministers, and an ardent believer in the Covenant, which was, to a great extent, the work of his hands. Then the pent-up enthusiasm of the multitude was let loose, and, a few of the nobility leading the way, "they all fell a-swearing and subscribing." Tears ran down the faces of many—both men and women—as they signed their names to the Covenant which was, they thought, to deliver Scotland from all her troubles, and to save their holy religion from the clutch of Antichrist. It is said that some of the subscribers wrote their names in their own blood, the more fervently to mark their devotion to the Cause. Montrose's bold autograph stands early in the list, with many other names of note.

Day after day crowds flocked in to sign. Even serving-maids and children came to take the Oath and "to hold up their hands" to the Covenant. When the noblemen, gentlemen and ministers who had come up to Edinburgh returned to their homes and parishes they took with them copies of the Covenant written on large sheets of parchment, and these they carried about with them that they might lose no opportunity of getting subscriptions. The number of subscriptions soon grew to be enormous, and it became dangerous, especially in the towns, to refuse to sign. Every Sunday the most popular preachers declaimed vigorously upon the merits of the Covenant and the sanctity of the Cause. The churches were filled to overflowing for hours before such sermons were preached, and a contemporary writer tells us that ladies even sent their maids the night before to keep their places for them!

It must not, however, be supposed that Scottish feeling was all on one side. A manuscript written in 1638, and still preserved in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, describes how an insolent Commissioner of the Shire came to the church which the writer attended and—observing that the general feeling was not in favour of the Covenant—angrily said "he desired but the names of those who refused to subscribe,

with a note of their worths in mean or otherwise, and he would soon take order with them."

It was by no means a pleasant thing to be "taken order with," as many ministers who refused to sign, or dissuaded their people from doing so, found to their cost. Such men were looked upon by the zealots of the Covenant as "no better than papists," and some ministers who had ventured to recommend the new Service Book were persecuted until they were forced to flee from their homes and parishes. So deep and lasting was the feeling of alarm which the King's ill-judged measures had produced in his native country.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST MISSION TO ABERDEEN

“ When civil dudgeon first grew high  
And men fell out, they knew not why,  
When Gospel trumpeter, surrounded  
By long-eared rout to Battle sounded,  
And Pulpit, drum, ecclesiastic,  
Was beat with fist instead of a stick,  
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,  
And out he rode a-colonelling.”

*Hudibras.*

OF the great events that had taken place in Scotland during 1638 the winter and spring of 1638 the King had received very imperfect information. The reports of his Privy Council in Edinburgh led him to believe that though there had been much riotous and tumultuous opposition to the introduction of the new liturgy and canons, nothing very serious was to be apprehended. There were also those about his person who knew and approved of the secret designs of a few of the Scottish nobles, and these faithless courtiers, in whose loyalty Charles trusted implicitly, were ever ready with some gloss to explain away the fears which the turbulent utterances of the Covenanters, and their rapidly increasing animosity against the Bishops, were calculated to inspire.

When, however, news reached the King of the widespread agitation that accompanied the signing of the Covenant throughout his northern kingdom, he decided to send a Commission to investigate fully the grounds of the existing discontent, and to bring back to him trustworthy tidings of the real state of affairs. This important mission he entrusted to the Marquis of Hamilton, the man who had prevented his royal master from receiving into favour a possible rival in the person of Montrose.

The character of Hamilton has been perhaps more vari-



ously depicted by writers belonging to the seventeenth century than that of almost any other of the actors in the events connected with the Civil War, and the only supposition which in any way reconciles the conflicting views taken of his conduct towards the King who loved and trusted him is that he was easily influenced by those with whom he came into close contact, and that, as Sir Philip Warwick records, "he loved to gain his point rather by some serpentine winding than by a direct path." It is certain that Montrose, who was by nature disposed to take a favourable view of other men's characters and motives, distrusted and disliked Hamilton almost from the beginning of their acquaintance. In a paper written by Lord Napier some years later and intended for publication, the Marquis is described as "the prime fomentor of those misunderstandings betwixt the King and his subjects, whereby we were constrained to put ourselves in a posture of arming for our own defence." \*

The Commissioner arrived in Scotland in the beginning of June 1638, and he expected to be met at Haddington by the nobility and gentry, in order that he might enter the capital with the dignity befitting the King's representative. But the Covenanters would not permit "their subscribers, not even his nearest friends and vassals," to offer him this mark of respect. Lest, however, he should be too much offended by such a slight, the Lords Loudon, Lindsay and Rothes met him at Dalkeith with apologies for the absence of the rest of the aristocracy, and Rothes, whose insinuating manners and courtly speech made him very unlike the modern ideal of a Covenanter, succeeded in appeasing Hamilton's resentment, "after communing with him some two or three hours."

His entry into Edinburgh made up for previous neglect, and was regal in pomp. But conspicuous among the crowds who lined his route were five hundred of the ministers of the Kirk, standing in close ranks upon a braeside, all arrayed in their long black cloaks. Their austere countenances and lowering looks were hardly a pleasant welcome to the King's Commissioner. But he thought it politic to ignore their displeasure, and looking on them with a friendly smile, he

\* "The Remonstrance," 1645.

addressed them in Latin, using the words of St Matthew, v. 13, "Vos estis sal terræ." A minister who had not quite understood the words asked another what the Marquis had said. "Brother," replied he, intentionally misrepresenting the sense, "the Commissioner says it is *we* who make all the kail salt," alluding to a Scottish proverb intended to apply to meddlers and mischief-makers. The narrator of this little piece of by-play adds that "there was so much of salt truth in the jest that it was by many taken notice of, though in what sense the Commissioner spoke it is unknown."

Though Hamilton's widespread connections amongst the nobility fitted him in some respects to discharge the duties required of him, the general distrust with which he was at this time regarded in Scotland was a serious drawback to him as a mediator between King and people. Many of the leading men, especially those amongst the clergy, looked upon him as one of the worst of those evil counsellors whose influence with the King was commonly supposed to be at the root of all their grievances. Others suspected him of secret disloyalty and of a design to gain the crown of Scotland for himself. In case the existing royal family failed, his descent from the daughter of James II. placed him nearest to the throne; and if, as is probable, Montrose suspected him of ambitious designs for himself, the suspicion would be confirmed by a remarkable circumstance that took place during Hamilton's stay in Edinburgh.

Roths, Loudon and Montrose, with three of their clerical colleagues, obtained an audience of the Royal Commissioner early in July at a Conference held in Holyrood House, to which Hamilton had summoned the Lords of the Privy Council. Nothing noteworthy appears to have taken place at the Conference, but at its close Hamilton drew the Deputies of the Covenant aside, and taking them to a corner of the gallery, he addressed them privately in the following words: "My Lords and Gentlemen, I spoke to you before as the King's Commissioner, but now, there being none present but ourselves, I speak to you as a kindly Scotsman; if you go on with courage and resolution you will carry what you please, but if you faint or give ground in the least you are undone."



That night Mr Henry Guthrie (afterwards Bishop Guthrie, but at that time a covenanting minister) being at supper with Montrose, the Earl told him the story, adding that "it wrought an impression that my Lord Hamilton might intend by this business to advance his own design" (presumably upon the Scottish crown), "but that he would suspend his judgment until he saw farther, and in the meantime look more narrow to his walking."

The following morning Guthrie heard the same account through one of the ministers who had been present at the interview. Such underhand policy was only too common among Scottish statesmen of the period, and Montrose alone, of the nobles, at least, whom Hamilton addressed, was likely to be revolted by the duplicity implied in the Commissioner's advice. Hamilton returned to Court, bearing an urgent request from the Covenanters to be allowed to call a General Assembly which might settle the questions on which they were at issue with the King, while Montrose was despatched to carry out their policy in the north.

The only district in Scotland which still held out against the Covenant was that of Aberdeen, where the influence of the loyal Marquis of Huntly was strong. There, too, an old collegiate establishment had drawn together a number of scholarly and sober-minded divines, and their teaching was free from the narrow fanaticism which had spread rapidly of late over the country.

Such independence of thought was offensive to the ruling powers at Edinburgh, and in the hope of securing at least an apparent unanimity of opinion throughout Scotland, before the expected meeting of the Assembly, Montrose was commissioned to lead a proselytizing expedition to Aberdeen. The party consisted of thirty persons, and included several noblemen and gentlemen of good position, together with the three well-known apostles of the Covenant, Henderson, Dickson and Cant.

The good people of Aberdeen were apprised of the formidable visitation they were to expect by a letter from the Earl of Rothes to his kinsman, Patrick Leslie, one of the townsmen. In this letter the Earl assured the burghers that they would never repent signing the Covenant, and



whilst he admitted that the King was already willing to redress their grievances, he darkly hinted that there was something more behind, "a great work to be done which would shortly be seen." He ended his letter by requesting his cousin to attend my Lord Montrose, who was, he said, "a noble and true-hearted cavalier."

Thus forewarned, the loyal Aberdonians, though ill-disposed to fall in with the main object of the mission, prepared to receive their expected visitors with all courtesy. Montrose at least was no stranger. They had not forgotten the gallant boy-bridegroom who nine or ten years before had visited their town to have his portrait taken by Jameson, and whom they had then honoured to the utmost of their power. When the long cavalcade entered the town it was received with every mark of respect, and in compliance with a hospitable old custom, the Provost and Bailies offered their visitors the "cup of Bon Accord." It must have been sorely against Montrose's feelings to reject such kindly courtesy, but his churlish mentors in Geneva cloaks disdainfully refused to drink with men who had not subscribed the Covenant. The magistrates, much offended by the insult to their town, left the Commissioners to entertain themselves as they pleased, and bestowed the wine upon the poor in the bedehouse.

The learned doctors and professors of the University, more than one of them of European reputation, had made their own preparations for the reception of the visitors, and they now put into the hands of the three clerical champions of the Covenant a carefully drawn up paper, in which they gave their reasons for not subscribing that Confession of Faith. In return, their adversaries asked for the use of the pulpits of Aberdeen on the following Sunday, when they would, they asserted, easily convince both teachers and people of their errors. The Aberdonian divines, however, would not consent to be lectured from their own pulpits, and the three preachers had to extemporize a rostrum for themselves. A Puritan lady of rank allowed them to use for the purpose the window of a wooden gallery overlooking a large yard or close, and hither between the services of the day the people came to hear them. Mr Alexander Hender-

son preached first, Mr David Dickson next, and Mr Andrew Cant last, all of them taking the Covenant as their subject and "making a fashion," as one of their hearers observed, to answer the queries of the learned doctors of Aberdeen. An irreverent person who had stationed himself on the leads of a neighbouring house flung a flapping raven into the midst of the listening crowd during one of the sermons, but with this slight exception the proceedings were undisturbed.

The three ministers continued their harangues all through Monday, with small effect, for their eloquence failed to convince the Aberdonians, and they only secured a few signatures, amongst which was that of Patrick Leslie, the correspondent of the Earl of Rothes; his adhesion having, it was suspected, been withheld till after the speeches, to gain credit for the arguments of the preachers and to set an example at the right time. But even those who complied were so suspicious of the tendencies of the Covenant that Montrose had to add, for their satisfaction, a clause dictated by one of the doctors, to the effect that the subscribers had "no intention but of loyalty to His Majesty, as the said Covenant bears." This clause he and all his companions signed.

With this small success the Commissioners had to be content. They took horse again and rode about the country holding meetings, and after obtaining a few signatures they returned to Edinburgh without having made many real converts to the Cause. The loyal inhabitants of Aberdeen were rewarded by a special royal acknowledgment of the sturdy stand they had made against the Covenant. A detailed account of all the proceedings being forwarded to the Court, the King immediately wrote separate letters to the magistrates and to the professors, heartily thanking them for their dutiful behaviour and more particularly for "hindering the strange ministers from preaching in their churches."

## CHAPTER VI

### ENTER ARGYLL

“ . . . craven, a man of plots,  
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings,  
Accursed who strikes, nor lets the hand be seen.”  
TENNYSON, *Idylls of the King*, “Gareth and Lynette.”

HAMILTON'S reports convinced the King of the serious 1638 nature of the crisis, and he saw at last that it was hopeless to expect his northern subjects to submit to the ecclesiastical changes he had designed. This was a bitter disappointment to Charles, for he believed with all his soul that Episcopal government was essential to the well-being, if not to the very existence of a national Church, as well as to the maintenance of the Monarchy. He also felt it to be a national calamity that the public worship of the people, in any part of his dominions, should be dependent upon the chance utterances of individual ministers, instead of being guided by the beautiful and devout forms which had served the Church for many generations. It was therefore with extreme reluctance that he allowed Hamilton to return to Scotland laden with concessions on every point; with permission to call a General Assembly at once, and a promise that a Parliament should meet shortly in Edinburgh.

The Commissioner returned to Scotland in August, having been absent only a few weeks, and immediately published the King's Proclamation. Conciliatory as it was, it produced no good effect, and Hamilton tore it up in public. Charles, whose melancholy cast of countenance was strangely at variance with his singularly sanguine spirit, had probably hoped much from a proposal he made to supersede the new Covenant—with its bitter denunciations of Episcopacy—by putting in its stead the old National Confession of 1580, of which the later document professed to be a mere revival.



Several members of the Scottish Privy Council—amongst them Lord Napier—obeyed the royal order to sign the National Covenant in its older form, and Montrose upheld him for doing so, declaring that Napier and others who had signed it were “true Covenanters”; but most of the leaders fiercely opposed the plan, as they would have opposed any compromise that might have brought about a reconciliation between King and people. They maintained that any Covenanter who signed it would be guilty of “horrible impiety,” and thus the King’s cherished scheme, like so many of his plans, fell to the ground still-born.

Hamilton, now anxious to back out of his former attitude of approbation of the Covenant, maintained a reserve of manner which was in striking contrast with his previous friendly relations with the popular party. He even declined to see his mother, a violent partisan of the Covenant, who seems to have exercised considerable influence over her son when she was able to hold personal communication with him.

The King’s concessions were accompanied by some reasonable conditions, the chief of which were, freedom of election and the restoration of law and order in the land. But the leading Covenanters, far from accepting this favourable answer to their requests in a conciliatory spirit, proceeded to develop the hint contained in the letter of the Earl of Rothes to his Aberdeen cousin and show that their great work was yet to come.

By this time they had accumulated a considerable fund to meet the expenditure necessary to carry out their projects. In the fiery enthusiasm kindled by the popular acceptance of the National Covenant in February it was easy to set on foot what was called a voluntary contribution, and thirty-seven of the leaders quickly subscribed 670 dollars, Montrose heading the list with 25 dollars. The contribution soon became a regular tax at the rate of one dollar to a thousand marks of rent, and it was afterwards levied throughout Scotland by means of eight collectors in each shire, with a harshness and rigidity hitherto unknown in the country.

The General Assembly being summoned to meet at

Glasgow, the representative body of sixteen, generally known as "the Tables," exerted not only their influence, but their arbitrary power, in directing the choice of the different Presbyteries. Most of the electoral districts of Scotland had submitted without protest to the directions sent down to them from Edinburgh, but one Presbytery at least had made a struggle for its rights. The attempt failed, but it had important results, and the story of the affair illustrates the defects, as well as the good qualities, of Montrose. The Presbytery of Brechin had been directed to choose Erskine of Dun, a decided Covenanter, as their representative, but only a small minority obeyed the order. The rest of the electors, lay and clerical, chose Lord Carnegie of Kinnaird, Montrose's brother-in-law. The minority sent Erskine's commission to Edinburgh asking for advice, and it was returned, not only with the written approbation of the Tables, but with a short, clear statement that Carnegie's election was illegal, notwithstanding his having been chosen by a considerable majority, because it was contrary to the directions of the Tables. Montrose and one or two others signed this note, which was boldly written on the back of the commission. At this time he had no more respect for the freedom of election stipulated for by the King than the most bigoted Covenanter of them all.

From this method of election it is easy to gain an idea of the character of the Assembly which met on the 24th of November in the old Cathedral Church at Glasgow. None of the sacred associations connected with the fine old building could have power to touch the turbulent minds of the men assembled within its quiet walls. There was so much noise and crowding for the first two or three days that the ministers and elders could with difficulty push their way to their places, or make themselves heard when they got there. Baillie, who was one of the clerical representatives, records with much feeling the extreme want of reverence which shocked even him—ardent opponent though he was of forms and ceremonies—and caused him to exclaim that in this respect they "might learn from Canterbury or the Pope, or even from Pagans," for that the people who passed in to see and hear made "such a din and clamour in the house



of the true God that if they minted \* to use the like behaviour in his chamber he would not be content till they were down the stairs."

In the midst of this noise and confusion the King's Commissioner opened the General Assembly, and subjects of contention at once presented themselves. A preliminary protest against the exclusion of the bishops was met with unbending resolution by the zealous Covenanters. The character of being "earnest to speak much" is attributed to them by one of their own chroniclers, and they had so much to say against the bishops that it was not until the fourth day that the reading out of the commission was begun. Then an incident occurred in which Montrose was closely concerned.

It was he who handed the commission of Erskine of Dun to the clerk—Archibald Johnston of Warriston—and that official ("unadvisedly," as Baillie observes) read out not only the commission, but part of the note, betraying the manner of the election, on the back of it. Suddenly, seeing that there was something compromising in this note, Johnston stopped short in the middle. Hamilton, who knew something of the manner in which this Assembly, so hostile to the King, had been packed, caught at the opportunity and demanded to see the commission. After a vehement discussion, Henderson, the Moderator, refused to grant Hamilton's request, stating that the declaration at the back was an accident, and was not meant to be publicly read. Hamilton had at last to give in, saying as he did so, "Let God Almighty judge if this be a free Assembly, in which His Majesty's Commissioner is denied that which cannot be denied to the meanest of his subjects."

Some of the leading Covenanters were much annoyed at this exposure of their interference with the free course of the elections, and Mr David Dickson, the well-known minister, stood up in his place to speak of this "backwrit, as having some negligence in it," implying distinctly that he considered it imprudent to have written the direction of the Tables on the back of the commission, open to the inspection of all the world. But Montrose, though he had allowed his youth-

\* Minded or intended.



ful zeal to drive him into a wrong and illegal action, was incapable of wishing to deny or conceal what he had done. He replied with some warmth to Mr David Dickson, and declared himself ready "to avow the least jot that was writ." The discussion ended with a hot dispute between Montrose and his father-in-law, who naturally took the part of his son, the excluded candidate.

On the day following this scene—28th November 1638—the Royal Commissioner stood up and made a speech, which Baillie calls "a sad, grave and sorrowful discourse." "He acted it with many tears" (men were far more openly emotional in those days than they are now), and not a few of his audience were deeply affected as he dwelt on his own sincere endeavour to serve his beloved country, and his grief at having to depart without obtaining a peaceable settlement of the questions on which they were at variance with the King. He then solemnly dissolved the Assembly, giving as his reason for doing so, "the spoiling of the Assembly which he had obtained most free, by their most partial directions from the Tables at Edinburgh."

After this the assembled representatives had no legal warrant for any further proceedings, but though three or four of them were loyal enough to depart, alleging that "their commission had an express clause of the King's countenancing the Assembly," their leaders were not to be checked so easily, and Loudon at once put it to the vote that the members should unite in protesting against the departure of Hamilton, and should then continue to sit as if nothing had happened. This method of protesting was a regular habit with the Covenanters, who seemed to consider themselves absolved from any command of the King's, however lawful, if they only met it with a protestation. Many of the members, however, had their scruples about continuing to sit after a formal dissolution, and would probably have slipped away the next day if they had not been reassured from an unexpected quarter.

Roths and Loudon had till now been looked upon as the leading spirits of the Covenant, but the time had come when a commander-in-chief was needed for the successful carrying out of the revolutionary ideas latent in the move-

ment, and neither Rothes nor Loudon was strong enough for the position. At this critical moment a man suddenly appeared on the scene who was exactly fitted by character and position to place himself at the head of his discontented countrymen and fill the place vacated by the King's representative.

This man was Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll, the most powerful subject in Scotland, a man in the prime of life and known to be high in the King's favour. He had immense possessions in the Western Highlands, and wielded there an authority far more absolute and arbitrary than any of which King Charles had ever dreamed. Appealed to by the Moderator, "though he was no member of the Assembly, yet for the common interest he had in the Church, to be pleased to countenance their meetings and bear witness to the righteousness of all their proceedings," Argyll stood up before the assembled representatives of the Kirk on the day after Hamilton's departure. All eyes were turned towards him in eager anxiety as to what part he was going to take, for as yet he had held entirely aloof from the national quarrel. Argyll's face was not attractive. He was under forty, but the deep lines on his high forehead made him look older than he really was. The small close-set eyes, disfigured by a decided squint, the droop of the long nose, and the sinister curl of the thin upper lip, had earned for him the nickname of Gillespie Grumach (the grim), given to him by his own Highlanders, but his figure was not lacking in dignity nor his face in keen intelligence. He looked what he was: a dangerous enemy and a doubtful friend.

Before the Commissioner had turned his back upon the Assembly Argyll had asked leave to speak a few words, but his speech had been so ambiguous that it had left his hearers in doubt as to his intentions. To-day he threw off hesitation, and forthwith took the lead amongst them. His presence infused confidence into the Assembly at this most critical moment, for not only was he an important member of the Privy Council, but he was believed to be in favour both with the King and the Commissioner. Baillie, with others who were not in the deepest secrets of the Covenant, even supposed that he stayed among them with the express

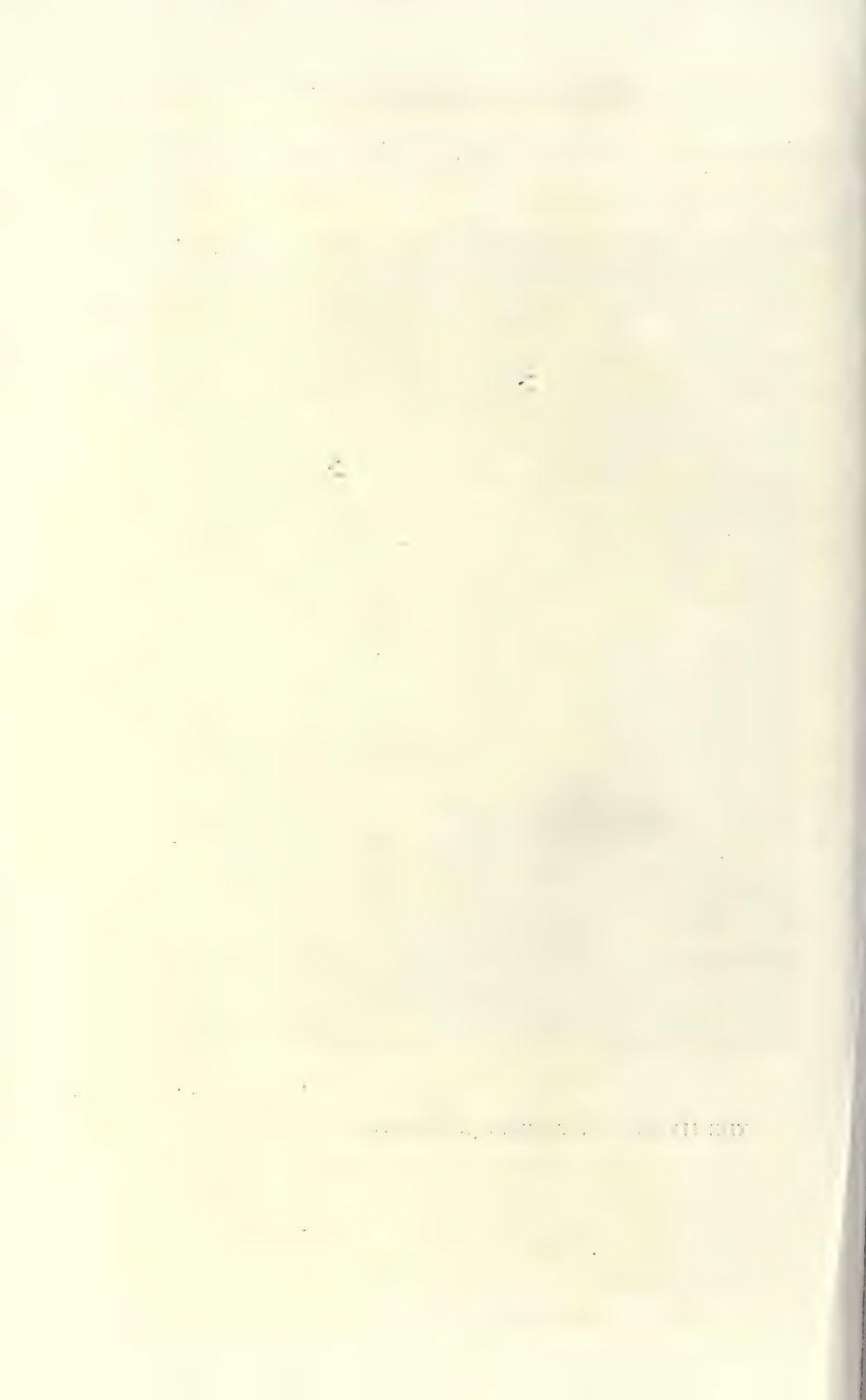




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THE MARQUIS OF ARGYLL (NEWBATTLE PORTRAIT)





connivance of both, in order to keep them from rushing to desperate extremes. But Argyll, as an eminent historian of our own day has said, "was a type of the adroit party leader who is moved by his party but never succeeds in guiding it."

Under his leadership the Assembly undertook to judge the bishops, and after pronouncing them guilty (absent and undefended as they were) of the vilest crimes, it proceeded to excommunicate them, and finally to abolish Episcopacy throughout the country.

That such violent injustice was not accomplished with the honest consent of the whole Assembly may be gathered from Baillie's account of his own experiences. He felt much hesitation about the vote of immediate excommunication, which involved at least one bishop for whom, only a year before, he had expressed strong regard and respect; but after a night's reflection he brought himself round to the opinion of his leaders. He was still more troubled when he was called upon to vote for a clause which condemned Episcopacy as wicked and unlawful in itself, since he knew that "all reformed Churches and all the famous and classic divines that ever put pen to paper absolved it of unlawfulness." But he was too timid to make any public dispute, and above all evils he feared to be the occasion of any division in his own party, "so when the members were asked to propound what doubts they had, he, with all the rest, was as dumb as a fish."

On one occasion his doubts were too strong to be silenced and he made up his mind to vote in the negative, sending up beforehand a paper expressing his reasons for dissent, to be shown to the Moderator and Lord Loudon. The latter easily convinced Baillie that it was not for his good to be found contradicting the Synod, and to spare him the unpleasantness Loudon contrived that his name should be passed over in calling the list of members. Baillie appears to have been duly grateful for this considerate suppression of his vote. He was, in fact, one of those men, common enough in every age, who are pushed to the front by their position and reputation for learning. With the best intentions, but without moral backbone, they easily become the

tools of the more unscrupulous members of their party, and in times of rapid change and revolution the compliant weakness of such men makes them dangerous. Without strength or courage to resist the impetus of the fast-rising current, they involuntarily drift on with it to its work of destruction, and like the floating debris in a great flood become more potent for evil than the few strong spirits that seek to steer their course.

Montrose does not appear to have taken an active part in the persecution of the bishops, and he certainly had nothing to do with the disgraceful plots to terrorize them whenever they should appear in public, in order to prevent them from complying with the summons addressed to them, and so putting in an inconvenient appearance at Glasgow before their self-constituted judges.

Before the Assembly separated the members divided themselves into committees, which undertook to see all the acts of the session carried out, and the Moderator concluded with thanks to God for their good success, and an address to the Earl of Argyll, expressive of their gratitude for his presence and counsel, by which they had been so greatly strengthened and comforted. Argyll answered them in a long speech, in which he apologized for declaring himself so late, explaining that he had always been set their way, but that he had delayed to profess it so long as he found that this reserve might be advantageous to the course they had taken. But now that matters had come to such a height he found "it behoved him to join himself openly to their society, otherwise he should be a knave."

Thus when the movement had gained strength enough to make it safe to abet it, Argyll took the part that was natural to him, "the part of the many against the few."\* The King was much hurt by the defection of so prominent a member of his Privy Council, of one, too, whom he had always treated with the greatest kindness and consideration. He had used his influence with the old Earl (who had become a Roman Catholic) to induce him to make over the fee simple of his estates to his son some years before his death. The old nobleman upon that occasion addressed a singular warning

\* Gardiner's *History*, vol. viii. p. 372.



to Charles, every word of which was afterwards fully verified.

"Sir," he said to the King, "I must know this young man better than you can do. You may raise him, which I doubt you will live to repent, for he is a man of craft, subtlety and falsehood, and can love no man, and if ever he finds it in his power to do you a mischief he will do it."

It is possible that Hamilton, when he turned his back on the Assembly, sincerely lamented the factious spirit in which the King's overtures had been met, but it was a satisfaction to him to write to his royal master, after that scene in the Cathedral, that though Rothes, Loudon and several others whom he named were the real contrivers of the Covenant, and still held it aloft, yet that among those who were as forward in show "none were more vainly foolish than Montrose."

Incapable as Hamilton was of forming a fair judgment on Montrose's motives, there was some truth in this stricture. In these early days of the Covenant, Montrose's youthful impetuosity carried him to greater lengths on the popular side than his mature judgment could approve of, and he had to look back with regret upon some of his actions during this period. His principles he never changed, and his mistakes were owing to an imperfect comprehension of the tendency of his actions. It is some justification of the course he pursued that Lord Napier and others of his friends, older and more experienced than himself, considered, like Montrose, that it was the duty of every true patriot to resist the policy of the Court, believing, as they did, that the King was swayed against his own better mind by evil counsellors, of whom Hamilton was chief.

Montrose and his friends had good cause to distrust the sincerity of the Royal Commissioner, and Baillie, if he could have seen the letters which Hamilton wrote to the King while the General Assembly was sitting, would have been less affected by the moving phrases of the parting speech. During his four months' stay in Scotland, Hamilton, in spite of his reserved demeanour, had contrived entirely to change the harsh opinion which Baillie and many others of the party had formed of his character. He had made them believe that he

was sincerely devoted to the good of his country, and that he loved Scotland with patriotic fervour.

Yet in his letters to the King at this very time he wrote of his native country in terms that agreed ill with the overflowing and tender patriotism which had melted the hearts of the Assembly. "If," he writes, "I keep my place (though next hell I hate this place), if you think me worthy of employment, I shall not weary till the Government be again set right, and then I will forswear this country. . . . I have now only this one suit to your Majesty, that if my sons live they may be bred in England. . . . I wish my daughter be never married in Scotland." He also advised the King to use sharp measures to bring his rebellious subjects to reason, adding that "to make them miserable and bring them again to a dutiful obedience would not be a work of long time, nor so difficult as they had foolishly fancied to themselves."

With such advisers no wonder that Charles's policy towards his native country was one long series of blunders. His sincere desire to rule his people righteously and for their highest good was thwarted by his lack of insight, and by his inability to find men who could be trusted either to carry out his designs with wisdom and moderation, or to show him that under existing circumstances they could not be carried out at all.

## CHAPTER VII

### SECOND EXPEDITION TO ABERDEEN

"A wight he was whose very sight would  
Entitle him mirror of knighthood,  
That never bowed his stubborn knee  
To anything but chivalry."

*Hudibras.*

AFTER the rebellious acts of the late Assembly, civil war was inevitable, and there is plenty of evidence to show that those who had guided the movement from the beginning had long looked forward to the probability of such a result. In a country so turbulent as Scotland an appeal to arms was the rule rather than the exception in every quarrel, public or private, and discontented nobles had repeatedly offered armed resistance to measures that had offended them, without altogether throwing off their allegiance to their Sovereign.

The real leaders of the Covenant had for some time past been secretly collecting arms and ammunition from abroad, and they had latterly secured an ally of great importance in the person of a Scottish soldier of fortune who had served with distinction under Gustavus Adolphus. This was Field-Marshal Alexander Leslie, whom Baillie describes as "a little crooked soldier"—a man of considerable tact and of great military experience. He was a distant cousin of the Earl of Rothes, who, on Leslie's return from abroad, quickly saw the gain he would be to the Cause, and confided to him all the secret plans of the party. For some time Leslie was not brought prominently forward, but he began at once to organize a plan of military defence, and induced a great number of those Scottish officers who had been serving as mercenaries in the German wars to return to their native country, promising them a profitable field for the exercise of their trained skill and courage. "They came," writes Spalding, "in great haste upon hope of bloody war, thinking to make up their fortunes upon the ruin of our kingdom."



In the beginning of January 1639, Leslie was occupied in casting trenches about the town of Leith, and as he had by that time established a regular Council of War, the Covenanters no longer attempted to conceal their determination to support their demands by force of arms. It might be difficult to prove which side first virtually threatened the other with hostilities, but no one can doubt that the real reluctance lay with the King, though he believed that, with an army at his back, he could easily bring the rebel Scots to reason. Tidings of the openly hostile preparations in and around Edinburgh at last drove him to consult his English Privy Council as to the means by which order might be restored in his northern kingdom.

There was money in the Exchequer and an army was slowly raised, but the King was disappointed by the lack of interest shown by his English subjects in the expedition, and it soon became evident that a secret understanding existed between the Covenanters and the Puritan leaders in England.

1639 The Royal Lieutenancy of the north of Scotland was conferred upon the Marquis of Huntly, but Hamilton was still trusted with the chief management of Scottish affairs, and the timorous if not insincere policy of the favourite prevented the gallant Gordons and their allies from offering any effectual resistance to the Covenanters. Huntly had been promised arms and men from England, but he received only a hundred horse, with a small proportion of the expected arms, and he was fettered by the strictest orders to remain on the defensive and risk nothing. No policy could have been more ill suited than this to the character of the loyal clans, and to Huntly himself it must have been unwelcome, for he had been reputed a skilful and daring soldier; when a young man he had been captain of the famous Scottish Guard in France.

In January 1639, Huntly was informed by Sir Thomas Burnet of Leys, who, though a strong Covenanter, was yet on friendly terms with the loyal Marquis, that the Tables at Edinburgh were about to take steps to compel Aberdeen to submit to the legislation of the last Assembly, and that they intended also to "repair the faults" of the University. "But," said Huntly, "the last Assembly has no authority to enforce its Acts, for they have not received the King's

sanction." "My Lord," replied Sir Thomas, "I fear these things will be done with an army." After this warning Huntly held his followers in readiness and waited anxiously for the promised help from England. None arrived, but before many weeks had passed Sir Thomas Burnet's words came true. 1639

The fiery energy and practical ability of Montrose had been sufficiently proved during the last year, and he was appointed commander of the force which was to tame the spirit of the loyal north. With several other noblemen he had already started on a reconnoitring expedition, and on the 1st of February he was at Forfar holding a committee, the object of which was to raise men and money in defence of the Covenant, but he met with considerable opposition from several noblemen of the district, including amongst others the Earl of Southesk.

"By what authority," inquired Montrose's father-in-law, "are you thus stenting the King's lieges?" "We have the warrant of the Tables at Edinburgh," answered Montrose, "and by that warrant we require you and all that are here to number your men and keep them well armed and in readiness to assist the Tables." "We are all the King's subjects," replied Southesk with spirit, "subject to his service, but to no Table or subject sitting thereat, and our lands cannot be stented nor our men numbered but at the King's command and in his service." So saying Southesk and his friends mounted their horses and rode away, leaving Montrose and his committee still sitting in the Tolbooth at Forfar.

But Montrose was not to be daunted by a little opposition; on the contrary, it spurred him to greater activity. He resolved to plunge at once into the heart of the hostile district, and invited the northern Covenanters to meet him at Turriff, a small village within a dozen miles of Huntly's Castle of Strathbogie. Huntly, hearing of the impending inroad into his country, prepared to occupy the village with his own followers, hoping to perplex and inconvenience the Covenanters, as well as to show them that they could not count on having everything their own way in the north. Montrose, however, discovered the plan and determined to be beforehand with his opponents. Rapidly mustering such



of the Angus and Mearns cavalry as were nearest and readiest, he galloped them across the Grampians, "scarce even sleeping or resting till he got to Turriff, accompanied by near two hundred gallant gentlemen." The Forbeses and Frazers, with all whom they had been able to gather together in so short a time, did not fail him, and were at the rendezvous in good time on the day appointed. The unexpected rapidity of the movement brought the Covenanters first on the ground, and they marched into the little town, a gallant array of eight hundred well-armed and well-mounted gentlemen, with a few foot-soldiers. These last, who were armed with muskets, were placed in an advantageous position for defence round the churchyard, while Montrose and his committee sat within the kirk.

When Huntly, with a brave following of two thousand five hundred men, arrived, he was surprised and disappointed to find the enemy already in possession. The Royalists encamped in the fields, and some of the barons who were with Huntly strongly urged him not to lose so good an opportunity of striking a blow at the Covenanters, but the Royal Lieutenant showed his orders, received from Hamilton, which strictly enjoined him to avoid fighting.

One of the loyalist lords went of his own accord to parley with Montrose, who sent back a civil message to the effect that he and his party had no intention of breaking the peace, but that he would not submit to injury if he could help it, and that if Huntly and his followers had any business in Turriff they might go to any part of it they pleased except that occupied by the Covenanters. Thus this meeting of armed and hostile parties passed off without bloodshed and the little town was left in peace. Huntly's army at once dispersed and Montrose returned to Edinburgh the next day with a report which satisfied the Covenanters that there was no loyal force in the north strong enough to prevent them from enforcing upon others that uniformity in religion which they had so vigorously resisted when the King, in far milder fashion, had proposed to apply it to themselves. This bloodless *rencontre* was called the "first raid of Turriff," and a wonderfully exaggerated report of it appeared soon afterwards in the *Paris Gazette*, under the heading of "the siege



and taking of the great town of Turriff, in Scotland, by the Marquis of Huntly."

Meanwhile the pupil of the great Gustavus had not been idle, and a well-drilled little army, consisting of about two thousand horse and foot, was by this time ready to take the field. Montrose was appointed Commander-in-Chief, but as he was only twenty-six years old and inexperienced in the art of war, he was to be accompanied by General Leslie as Adjutant and by several other officers who had been trained in the German wars.

Tidings of these formidable preparations soon reached Huntly, and acting upon his instructions to avoid bloodshed, and to gain time, he sent Commissioners to make terms with Montrose. They found the Earl at his house of Old Montrose, busily preparing for his expedition, and they earnestly pressed him to take no further steps until it was seen whether the King would treat with the Covenanters. On this condition Huntly promised to keep strictly within the bounds of his Lieutenancy (which was confined to the northern counties) and not to interfere in any way with the Covenanters dwelling within his jurisdiction. Montrose replied firmly, though with courtesy, that he must visit Aberdeen, but that he and his followers would pay for whatever they took, and would not commit any unprovoked act of violence. With this answer the messengers returned to Aberdeen, where the news they brought was very unwelcome, for in spite of any assurance to the contrary, it was not easy to believe that the visitation upon the loyal city of so large a body of unfriendly troops could be altogether harmless to the inhabitants. Huntly began at once to bring together his followers, and by about the middle of March he had above two thousand well-armed men at Inverurie; but he had no confidence in the skill of his officers and he felt that, under the circumstances, fighting would be mere rashness. He therefore made one more attempt to come to an agreement with Montrose, hoping at any rate to gain time, for he was in hourly expectation of orders from the King which might relieve him from the perplexity of not knowing whether he was to fight or to retire. His Commissioners accordingly made a hasty journey southwards and this time found the young "Lord General" at

the town of Montrose, in company with Adjutant-General Leslie and several other officers of rank. The greatest bustle prevailed; the town was full of the newly levied soldiers, and two brass cannon, with several smaller pieces of artillery, had been brought from Edinburgh; "strange ingredients for the visitation of a University!" as the contemporary narrator—himself one of Huntly's Commissioners—observed.

The Lowland burghers and artisans who were about to try the novel trade of soldiering did not enter into the business with much confidence or enthusiasm. Hitherto they had sat in Assemblies and taken unarmed castles, but now they expected to have to attack a real enemy in the open field, and the danger appeared so overwhelming that they trembled at the sound of their own drums and cannon. During their first embassy the Aberdeen Commissioners had an opportunity of witnessing the nervous alarm which these warlike preparations had stirred up. After ten o'clock on the first night of their stay in Montrose, some of the inhabitants of the town saw flames rising from behind some hills a little to the north, and at once concluding that Huntly and his clan were about to descend upon them, and that they were burning the villages on their way, they began to ring the alarum bell and to beat the drums. The Commissioners in vain assured them that there was no danger; that Huntly was no nearer than Aberdeen. The terrified burghers armed in haste, and would even have wreaked their anger upon the peaceable envoys, if the Provost, in whose house they lodged, had not shut his gates against the excited crowd. They continued, however, to make a great noise and tumult and remained under arms all night, until the dawn revealed to them that the cause of their vain terror was nothing but a stretch of burning heather on the hillside. The peace-loving citizens would have been delighted if Huntly's envoys had succeeded in persuading Montrose to confine his campaigning for the present to the south of the Forth. But he was inflexible, and it was evident to the Commissioners that their coming would not delay his march for a single hour.

Yet in the midst of all this turmoil of preparation the young Commander found time to think of making a provision for his youngest sister Beatrix, who was still unmarried.



## SECOND EXPEDITION TO ABERDEEN 51

In a deed which makes mention of the “singular and special love and favour” he had for her, he assigns to her for “tocher,” or marriage portion, a sum of twenty thousand marks, to be paid out of his estate by himself or his heirs. The deed was signed by him at Old Montrose on the 27th of March, and it would seem that he desired to make all safe for her before he started on an expedition the issue of which was uncertain. This touch of brotherly affection is the more interesting because it throws a faint gleam of light upon Montrose’s home life, hardly any record of which has been preserved.

Huntly’s Commissioners, having failed to obtain even a short respite for Aberdeen, turned back with heavy hearts, foreseeing much trouble for themselves and their country. They left Montrose early in the morning, and before they were two miles out of the town their fears were confirmed by a frightful portent which they imagined they saw in the heavens. Though the sky was blue, the air clear, and the sea, stretched at their feet, lay calm and vapourless, yet did the sun shine down with a blood-red light, pronounced by the three learned professors, who formed part of the deputation, to be unnatural and prodigious, a sign and presage, as they all agreed, of coming war! Upon reaching Aberdeen they found that Huntly had already disbanded his forces, having probably received orders from the King through Hamilton.

When the townspeople heard that the much-dreaded visit of the Covenanters was not to be averted, that there was no hope of succour from the King, and that their own Marquis had deserted them in their hour of need, “they began to be heartless and comfortless and entirely to despair, not knowing what course to take,” as their quaint old chronicler writes. Hitherto they had prepared with spirit to defend the town. They had worked hard at making trenches and strengthening the fortifications; they had drilled diligently, and every man carried a sword at his side. But now they met in melancholy consultation, and agreed that, as all was lost, they should put away their arms, cease all warlike preparations, and open their gates to the approaching Covenanters. Then every man began to shift for himself.



Some removed their goods, some fled with their families from the town. Several of the loyal lairds of the district left their country houses, and with sixty of the bravest youths of Aberdeen, well armed with sword, musket and bandoleer, took ship and went to the King, who, holding his Court at York, was doing his best to collect an army. Those who remained wisely resolved to do all they could to propitiate the Covenanters, and accordingly the Provost directed the bailies, each in his own quarter, to give orders that lodgings as commodious as the town could afford should be prepared for the expected though unwelcome visitors.

On Friday, the 29th of March 1639, late in the afternoon, the dreaded host came in sight, and took up a position on a hillside within three miles of the town, though there was light enough for them to have reached it before night had their Commander so willed. At ten o'clock next morning they marched into Aberdeen in orderly array, about nine thousand strong, their young General, who was noted for his graceful horsemanship, riding at their head. They carried five colours or ensigns, the motto on that of Montrose being "For Religion, the Covenant and the Country." Downcast and frightened as they were, the townspeople could not help admiring the soldier-like appearance of men and officers. By the side of Montrose rode the old Field-Marshal, to whose advice all the proud Scottish nobles in this warlike procession were bound to listen, and such was the tact of "this little old crooked soldier," says Baillie, "that from beginning to end they all submitted to him, as if he had been great Solymán."

The covenanting host was well armed and appointed, and every man was gay with blue ribbons, the foot-soldiers wearing them in bunches in their Scottish bonnets, and the cavalry putting them scarfwise across their breasts. "This," says James Gordon, a contemporary writer, "was Montrose's whimsies." The clerical politicians, who believed in no goodness that was not arrayed in sad-coloured garments, and who looked with suspicion upon any outburst of natural gaiety, must have murmured much under their breath at having to endure "whimsies" so unintelligible to them.

Montrose faithfully kept his promise to Aberdeen. He

marched his men in brave order through the town, from the Upper Kirkgate Port, out by the Justice Port to the Queen's Links. Then, being joined by about two thousand of the northern Covenanters, he called a general muster of the whole army, after which "the men were commanded by sound of trumpet, in General Montrose's name, to go to breakfast." Montrose himself, with the other nobles and commanders, sat down in the links and "of their own provision, with a servite on their knee, took breakfast." \* The same day, at four in the afternoon, he went on to Kintore, and having encamped there over the Sunday, he marched on Monday to Inverurie, leaving the Earl of Kinghorn with eighteen hundred men to hold Aberdeen until his return.

Many of the townspeople and most of the neighbouring lairds, "seeing no help," subscribed the Covenant, hoping by so doing to save their houses and estates from being plundered; for though, through the unexpected leniency of the young Commander-in-Chief, this armed visitation had as yet proved far less formidable than had been expected, there were many threatening countenances among the unwelcome guests. Conspicuous among these were the preachers who had accompanied the army, and now remained behind to shout victory from the forsaken pulpits of the more sober divines, driven from their homes by the approach of the Covenanters.

Huntly had retired to the Bog of Gicht (Gordon Castle), and he now made another effort to treat with Montrose. Unfortunately for them both, as events turned out, this effort proved successful, and they met on Thursday, the 4th of April, at a village between Inverurie and Strathbogie. Each was accompanied by eleven of his friends "with only swords at their sides," and Huntly, after a long private conversation with Montrose, the details of which did not transpire, rode back with him to the camp of the Covenanters. There he signed a modified version of the Covenant, which only bound him "to maintain the King's authority, together with the liberties both of Church and State, Religion and Laws," a declaration which he must have thought should rather have

\* Spalding, *History of the Troubles*, &c.



been required by him from those who pressed it upon him. But it is evident from first to last that Montrose honestly wished to maintain the King's lawful constitutional power and prerogative, and that he had no thought of engaging in a revolutionary movement tending to upset all lawful authority and sure to end in anarchy.

In addition to signing this innocent "Bond of Maintenance," Huntly agreed to allow any of his followers who were willing to sign the Covenant to do so, and for the security of such among them as were Roman Catholics, Montrose, with an easy liberality strangely in contrast with the views and opinions held by the chief representatives of the popular party in Scotland, drew up a short declaration which ran as follows:

"For as mickle as those who by profession are of a contrary religion and therefore cannot condescend to the subscribing of the Covenant, yet are willing to concur with us in the common course of maintaining the laws and liberties of the Kingdom, these are therefore requiring that none of those who being Papists by profession, and willing to subscribe the Bond of Maintenance of the laws and liberties fore-said, shall be in anyways molested in their goods or means nor sustain any prejudice, more than those who have subscribed the Covenant."

But however reassuring Montrose's unexpected liberality and friendly bearing might be, Huntly soon perceived that he had done a rash thing in venturing within the leaguer of the Covenanters, and he sent Gordon of Straloch to Montrose, to warn him in confidence against listening to the counsels of those whose bitter personal animosity against the Royal Lieutenant would lead them to use every means in their power to have him detained a prisoner. Montrose assured Gordon that he would do his best to protect Huntly, but he added that everything in the covenanting camp was decided by vote in committee, and that his own power was narrowly limited. He did, however, succeed this time in over-ruling the clamours of the unfriendly Highlanders, and the Marquis returned home without molestation.

A few days later Montrose broke up his camp at Inverurie and returned to Aberdeen. On his way thither he was met



by twelve of Argyll's clansmen, bearing a civil message from their chief, who had sent a band of his own Highlanders, five hundred strong, to join the army. These wild western mountaineers were held in dread by the whole country, and Montrose, though he received them graciously, would not allow them to enter Aberdeen, but quartered them on the lands of the loyal lairds who had fled at his approach, thus putting in practice a lesson taught him by the old Field-Marshal, who had been accustomed in his foreign campaigns to make the enemy pay at least a part of the cost of war. The testimony of both the contemporary chroniclers who were eye-witnesses of these events proves that, with this exception, the young Commander took good care that his men should do no wrong either to the town or to the country people.

At Aberdeen, Montrose was joined by Lord Seaforth and two or three other chiefs, followed by a well-mounted body of cavalry, and a few days later a council was held, at which the easy terms granted to Huntly were sharply criticised. The Marquis was in lodgings at Aberdeen, having ridden in on the 10th of April with his two elder sons and forty horsemen. Whether he had come of his own accord or by suggestion of the Covenanters was not known, but Spalding writes that "it was reported he would not have come but upon the General's letter"; and, according to the same account, he said himself that he had received an assurance from the leaders that he should not be detained against his will. But this time Montrose's forebodings that the votes of his colleagues might be too strong for him proved to have been well founded. The detention of Huntly was vehemently urged, and to make an excuse for so unjustifiable a breach of faith, new obligations to which he was not likely to consent were pressed upon him. Spalding relates that Montrose himself pressed these conditions upon the Marquis, and urged him to accompany the army to Edinburgh, saying, "My Lord, seeing that we are now all friends, will ye not go south with us?" Huntly replied that he wished to go home to Strathbogie; upon which Montrose said, "Your Lordship will do well to go with us." Huntly then indignantly protested against the unfairness with which he had been treated,

and demanded the Bond he had signed at Inverurie. This was at once given him, and he asked, "Whether will ye take me a prisoner, or willingly of my own mind?" to which Montrose replied, "Take your choice." "Then," said he, "I will not go with you as a captive but as a volunteer."

This is the story as it stands in the pages of the loyal chronicler of Aberdeen, and if the inferences that have been drawn from it were correct, if Montrose had really anything to do with entrapping Huntly, it would be a deep stain upon his honour. But contemporary evidence, valuable as it is, requires considerable sifting. Allowance must be made for the personal or party views of the writer, the sources of his information must be inquired into, and such of his statements as are incompatible with clearly established facts must be regarded as the result of prejudice or insufficient knowledge. It is not in the least likely that the Town Clerk of Aberdeen was present at the interview which he describes so minutely. He got the story, in all probability, from one of the Gordons, and wrote it down while he was burning with indignation at the treatment the Marquis of Huntly received in Edinburgh, treatment against which there is reason to believe Montrose protested with all his might, though Spalding, looking upon him as a leader of the detested Covenanters, would at the time hold him responsible for it.

We have no account of the transaction from Montrose's side, and taking into consideration the great improbability that he should have committed an act of treachery wholly at variance with all we know of his life and character, we can only conjecture what the actual facts were. It seems not improbable that, having refused to give way in Committee to the majority who were for carrying off Huntly as a prisoner, in spite of the promises that had been given, and seeing that he was powerless to prevent them from doing as they wished, Montrose consented to use his influence to persuade the Marquis to come to Edinburgh of his own free will. The relations between them had ever since their first interview been entirely friendly; Montrose was satisfied with Huntly's consent to his own modified version of the Covenant, and a few days before the 15th of April he had sent word to Edinburgh "that the Marquis of Huntly was come in and sub-



scribed the Covenant, and gave his eldest son as pledge for his conduct." \* This sounds as if it had already been agreed that Lord Gordon should accompany the Covenanters, a circumstance that would add force to Montrose's plea, offered in all good faith, "My Lord, seeing we are all friends, will ye not go south with us?" It is allowed by both the hostile chroniclers, Spalding and Gordon, that Huntly went with Montrose not as a prisoner but as a free man, and free he would have remained had the other leaders been men like Montrose.

But no sooner did he arrive with the army in Edinburgh than he was summoned to the dreaded Green Table, and peremptorily requested to sign the Covenant pure and undiluted. He refused point-blank, saying that they might take his head from his shoulders but not his heart from his Sovereign. The unscrupulous men, who by this time ruled the King's lieges with a rod of iron, at once arrested the Marquis with his eldest son, Lord Gordon, and imprisoned them in the castle.

The account given by Menteith, another Scottish chronicler who wrote in French and printed his history in Paris in 1661, states that "Montrose opposed with all his might their determination to break the parole which had been given, nevertheless, his single authority being insufficient to prevent it, Huntly and his eldest son were carried prisoners to the Castle of Edinburgh, from whence they were not liberated till the Peace of Berwick," two months later.

It is not surprising that Huntly, being, as he was, an irritable and resentful man, should have borne a bitter grudge against Montrose—however innocent he may have been—for his share in an affair that ended so badly, but the fact that Lord Gordon became a few years later his warmest friend and most enthusiastic admirer tells strongly against the assumption that Montrose had been involved in the treacherous dealing of the Covenanters with Huntly and his family.

The townspeople of Aberdeen had reason to be grateful to the young General, for he had by no means inflicted on them the punishment that had been contemplated by the

\* Sir Thomas Hope's diary.



rulers in Edinburgh, and he reduced the fine he had been instructed to exact from a hundred thousand to ten thousand marks. This extreme moderation did not give satisfaction at headquarters. The covenanting clergy were much disappointed, and Baillie thus expressed his feeling on the subject: "The discretion of that generous and noble youth (Montrose) was but too great. A great sum was named as a fine to that unnatural city, but all was forgiven."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIGHT AT THE BRIG OF DEE

A bright shield hung on a greenwood tree,  
A shining shield that was fair to see ;  
There met two knights by the greenwood tree  
Who fell to disputing angrily :  
'The shield is silver.' 'The shield is gold.'  
So each brave knight the other told.

Their anger rose, and the two did fight  
Till, riding by, came another knight.  
'Oh, fools !' said he, 'for you both are right,  
One side is silver, the other gold.'

The shield was silver, the shield was gold,  
The tale is new and the tale is old."

THE position of the King and his Scottish subjects was very 1639 similar to that of the two knights in the fable, with this addition, that there were those on each side who saw and encouraged the delusions of both parties. To the King the Scots appeared a perverse and discontented people, who misunderstood and opposed measures honestly intended for their good, whom no concessions could satisfy, and who made of religious scruples a cloak for rebellion. They on the other hand believed that the King, or those evil counsellors who guided his actions, intended to force upon the country a Popish system of doctrine and Church government, and many of the clergy led their people to expect that these hateful innovations would be pressed upon the unwilling Kirk at the point of the sword. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the fear of Popery was the great lever of rebellion in Scotland—a lever made use of by unscrupulous nobles for their own selfish purpose—and that the King was as innocent of any intention to introduce Popery as he was of desiring his subjects to become Mohammedans.

During the absence of Montrose, Lord Napier had been doing his best to bring about an embassy to the King to

deprecate hostilities and urge a middle course. He was supported by the most influential members of the Privy Council and of the Scottish Bar, including even the highly puritanical Sir Thomas Hope; but Rothes and Loudon, with Argyll behind them, put down the attempt with a strong hand, and when the covenanting troops, with their General, returned from the north on the 20th of April, Edinburgh was in a state of great excitement, for the English army was marching northwards from York with the King himself at its head, and the Marquis of Hamilton was on his way, with a considerable fleet and five thousand men, to blockade the Scottish ports and destroy their commerce. If the populace were alarmed by these formidable preparations, they were kept in good spirits by the undaunted courage of their leaders, and by the active measures that were taken to offer an effectual resistance. Rothes, Loudon and Argyll were well provided with secret information from the English Court, and were quite aware of the King's extreme anxiety to avoid bloodshed. They knew also that there were elements of weakness in the royal army, and they had good reason for believing that Hamilton's ships and soldiers would do no harm to the Covenanters.

On the 1st of May 1639 the English fleet, consisting of twenty-eight ships, sailed into the Firth of Forth, and anchored within sight of Leith, between the two little islands of Inchkeith and Inchcolm. The citizens of Edinburgh were at first greatly perturbed, and flocked in armed bands to the coast to prevent the English forces from landing. Hamilton's mother came riding towards Leith at the head of a small body of troops, with two case pistols at her saddle-bow, declaring, it is said, that she would kill her son with her own hands if he offered to come ashore in a hostile way. He, however, made no such attempt, nor "did he trouble a man ashore with a shot"; but the covenanting noblemen encouraged all the stir and alarm in the town, the better, it was supposed, to conceal their secret communications with Hamilton, who succeeded in convincing Baillie, amongst others, that though at the head of a hostile fleet and army he was "yet a lover of his country—that the employment was thrust upon him—that he had accepted it with the re-



solution to manage it for the greatest advantage" (to the Covenanters?) "that his loyalty to his Prince would permit him."

By the middle of the month Field-Marshal Leslie, who was now, by general consent, Commander-in-Chief of the army he had organized, was perfectly ready to face an enemy. Many of the nobles held commissions as colonels under the wary old veteran, and an astonishing degree of discipline prevailed. The covenanting leaders, knowing that no danger was to be apprehended from Hamilton, were anxious to move their troops to the Border, where they expected the attack, but there was such a scarcity of money that it was feared the army would disband for want of pay. This danger was met by the appointment of a Committee with power to raise a sum sufficient for the need of the moment, a number of the chief noblemen and gentlemen in the kingdom giving security for the repayment of the money. Montrose, always ready to spend freely in support of the cause which he believed to be that of Religion and Liberty, was one of the first three who signed the bond of repayment, and Lord Napier, to whose care the document was entrusted, was also among those who subscribed.

This difficulty overcome, the covenanting army marched to the Border, accompanied by a considerable number of their ministers, whose value in keeping up the courage and enthusiasm of the soldiers Leslie fully recognised. Baillie was one of these members of the Kirk militant, and he found the expedition very much to his taste. He rode with the troops, carrying a sword and a couple of Dutch pistols, and he describes himself as feeling like a man who has taken his "leave of the world and was resolved to die in that service without return." He wrote to his friends at home that "a sweet, meek, humble, yet strong and vehement spirit was leading him along," and he did not forget to descant with eloquence upon the excellent fare which he enjoyed in his southern quarters.

Montrose, though he commanded a regiment in this army, did not go to the Border, for his presence was again required in the north, and he set out in that direction about the same time that Leslie and his troops marched southward.

The brave barons of the north, left by Huntly's imprisonment without a leader, had banded themselves together under the command of the Laird of Banff, the most inflexible royalist in the country, and one who could never be induced to sign the Covenant under any pretence. He and his loyalist friends had driven away the small covenanting force which Montrose had left encamped at Turriff, and had afterwards taken up their quarters in Aberdeen, where they were welcomed as protectors. They wrote to inform the King of their success, and to ask for aid, but the letter was intercepted, and the Covenanters were much disturbed by this "appearance of more troubles from the north." They perceived that should Hamilton send the soldiers whom he kept idle on board his ships to the assistance of the loyal Gordons and Ogilvies, a serious blow might be dealt against them from that quarter, and anticipating the danger, Montrose hastily gathered a small army and galloped northward with all speed, arriving at Aberdeen on the 25th of May.

The barons had already retreated, and the unlucky city offered no resistance, but the soldiers were more riotous this time than on the previous occasion. On Sunday, the 26th, while Montrose and the other nobles were in church, "the rascal soldiers were abusing and plundering New Aberdeen pitifully, without regard to God or man." No great outrages could, however, have been committed, for one of the chief complaints of the townspeople was that the soldiers had killed every dog in Aberdeen, because some of the women had tied blue ribbons round the poor animals' necks in derision of those worn by the army. The misdeeds of the soldiery met with no countenance from the General, who did everything in his power to protect the inhabitants.

The salmon-fishery of the Don and the Dee was an important branch of industry in the district, and quarrels arose between the fishermen and some of the covenanting soldiers, who not only ignored the rights of the proprietors of the banks, but violently seized upon the salmon caught by the native watermen. Refusing to submit tamely to the greed and insolence of the intruders, the sturdy men of the north stood up stoutly in their own defence, and one of the "rascal soldiers" was slain outright. When the owners of the land upon which



he struggle had taken place laid the circumstances before Montrose, he not only held them guiltless of the accident, but commanded a watch to be kept day and night to defend the two rivers, that the poor fishermen might follow their occupation without disturbance.

On the 27th of May a Council of War was held, and some of the Covenanters were for giving up the town to plunder, if not to fire and sword, but Montrose again interposed on the side of mercy, imposing only a fine of ten thousand marks, which was paid immediately. He made some show of severity by ordering the inhabitants, on pain of death, to deliver up their arms, and so frightened were they by this peremptory command, proclaimed with beating of drums through the streets of Aberdeen, that the poor people of the Old Town came running to the appointed place, some with muskets and hackbuts, others with such worthless arms as rusty old swords and headless spears!

The army marched out in order of battle on the 30th, in search of the barons, but these had already dispersed in small parties and were not to be found. A few days later, when Montrose was engaged in besieging the strongly fortified house of Sir John Gordon of Gicht, he received intelligence that Huntly's second son, Lord Aboyne—a youth of nineteen, who had been in England to ask help from the King—was on his way to Aberdeen with a flat conveying a number of troops. The covenanting army had by this time been weakened by the defection of some of the men, who were displeased with what Baillie terms Montrose's "too great lenity in sparing the enemies' houses." These patriots were in fact discontented because they were restrained from pillage and plunder. Montrose, on hearing of Aboyne's approach, abandoned the siege of Gicht, and to avoid the risk of being cut off from the south while he had so small a force at his disposal, he retreated rapidly but in perfect order, spending one night in Aberdeen. He halted again at Dunnottar Castle, close to Stonehaven, as the guest of the young Earl Marischal, who had accompanied him on this expedition.

It soon became clear that the report of Aboyne's strength had been greatly exaggerated. Had Montrose known the



truth about it, he would probably not have retired, but it was natural that he should believe in the existence of a considerable royalist force under Aboyne's command, for he knew that the young man had come straight from the King to Hamilton, and he knew also that Hamilton had spare troops to send wherever the royal cause needed reinforcement. The truth was, that though Hamilton had given Aboyne a cordial reception, had drunk with him to the King's health, and fired off salutes in the King's honour, he had answered his petition for military aid—a petition supported by a letter from Charles—by informing the brave youth that he had sent back only the day before as many troops as he could spare. All that Hamilton did for Aboyne was to provide him with some small pieces of artillery, and to introduce to him a Colonel Gun who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, and whom he highly recommended as a skilful and experienced officer.

Aboyne, who was invested, in his father's absence, with the Lieutenancy of the north, entered the Roads at Aberdeen with only two armed vessels and a Newcastle collier, on Sunday, the 2nd of June, while Montrose was still besieging the house of Gicht. The young Lieutenant, accompanied by the Lords Tullibardine and Glencairn, waited several days on board, expecting the arrival of some troops which Hamilton had half promised to send after him, and did not land until the day after the covenanting army had marched southwards. The expected reinforcements never arrived, but Lord Lewis Gordon, a wilful school-boy about fourteen years old, gathered together as many as he could of his father's warlike clansmen and hastily marched to join his brother. Glencairn and Tullibardine were but half-hearted Royalists, and feeling that without the aid of regular troops the enterprise had little chance of success, they rode off to their own houses, leaving the young representatives of the house of Huntly to support the royal cause alone.

Nothing daunted by this defection, these two mere boys, encouraged by a considerable reinforcement from their own loyal Aberdeen, marched out of the city on the 14th of June at the head of nearly 4000 gallant and well-armed men. Aboyne intended to make straight for the south, in the hope

of drawing off part of Leslie's troops, thus weakening the army which was on the march to oppose the King's force. But hardly had they left Aberdeen when they heard that Montrose and Marischal were strongly entrenched at Stonehaven with 800 men and several pieces of cannon. It would have been wiser if the Gordons had held to their first intention, but Hamilton's *protégé*, Colonel Gun, led them right up to Stonehaven, and posted them in order of battle upon the side of a hill overlooking the little town. If they had possessed any artillery this move might at least have been comprehensible, but Gun had sent all the pieces Aboyne had brought away from Hamilton on board the ships, arguing that they could be more easily carried in that way, and both ships and cannon had disappeared.

Montrose at once opened fire upon the royalist troops, and so ill-chosen was their position that they would have been cut to pieces had his guns been well served, but from want of skill in the gunners the shot mostly fell wide of the mark. A few men were, however, killed and wounded, and the Highland infantry, avowing that "they could not abide the musket's mother," fled in troops at the first volley. The rest of the foot, seeing themselves so unnecessarily exposed to danger, began to mutiny, and Gun, persuading Aboyne that he could do quite as well without them, allowed them to depart. When pressed to give his reason for placing his men in so dangerous a position, Gun only replied that he wished to make them cannon-proof.

The cavalry, after covering the retreat of the infantry, returned to Aberdeen, where they rallied round their young leader, but entreated him to have nothing more to do with "Traitor Gun," whose errors they believed to be intentional and meant to overthrow the royal cause. Aboyne refused to believe that the ill-success of a man so strongly recommended by Hamilton could be anything but accidental, and he continued to trust in this unworthy pupil of Gustavus Adolphus.

Montrose, quick to seize the advantage given him by the retreat of the Gordons, marched at once upon Aberdeen. Within six miles of the town an encounter took place between a few detached horsemen from both sides, in which the royalists had the best of it. One of these brave cavaliers,



Colonel Johnston by name, rode back quickly to ask his Commander for a hundred horse and fifty musketeers, with whom he was certain he could do the enemy great mischief, as he had satisfied himself that, in spite of their General's strict orders to his troops to keep diligent watch, the Covenanters, believing all the Royalists to be disbanded, were lying carelessly at their ease, and could be surprised without difficulty. Aboyne could not grant this request without first consulting Colonel Gun, who immediately declared that if any such enterprise were permitted "he would quit his charge and return to the King, leaving them to bear their own blame and burden."

Aboyne and his six hundred cavaliers, almost all Gordons, had returned to Aberdeen on Sunday, the 16th of June. Before sunrise on the 18th the drums beat, the trumpet sounded to horse, and the townsmen were commanded to arm. A few of the Gordon foot-soldiers who had not dispersed were sent on to the Bridge of Dee, two miles south-west of Aberdeen, to hold the post till the rest came up. The river itself, swollen by recent rains, could not be crossed by cavalry, and at the south end of the bridge was a gate which was quickly fortified with turf and earthworks. This defence was scarcely completed before the remainder of Aboyne's small force galloped up, soon followed by the four regiments from Aberdeen, and almost at the same instant Montrose's troops came in sight on the high ground beyond the bridge, about a quarter of a mile off. The musketeers took their place bravely upon the seven arches of the bridge, and directed a steady fire upon the enemy, who replied by sending some cannon-balls amongst them. The Aberdonians had better nerve than the Highland infantry at Stonehaven, and stood to their post gallantly, suffering very little loss, for the cannon was too far off to do much harm, and the turf-lined gate gave the men a good shelter. Even the women soon ventured to come to the bridge with provisions for their friends and relations who were on duty there.

All the long summer day the defence was successfully maintained, and when evening came both parties, thoroughly tired out, went to rest as if by common consent. But Montrose, who thought such delay little better than defeat, profited



by the short darkness of the June night to draw his cannon nearer, and by the first light of the early dawn he had placed them in a position to fire point-blank upon the fortified gate, and to scour the whole length of the bridge. Still the musketeers, backed by the cavalry, held their post, till at last Montrose made a feint of sending his horsemen along the side of the river to find a ford. Colonel Gun immediately drew off his own cavalry, ordering them to ride up the river side and prevent the covenanting horse from crossing. In vain he was assured that the fords were all impassable after the late rains. He insisted on the movement, and himself rode at their head. They passed within cannon range of the enemy, and a gallant gentleman, John Seton of Pitmedden, was killed by a shot that carried off the upper part of his body.

The defenders of the bridge were not more fortunate. A cannon-ball struck one of the turrets over the gateway, and a portion of the broken masonry falling upon Colonel Johnston, the commander of the musketeers, his leg was so badly crushed that he had to be carried away. The loss of their leader, together with the departure of their cavalry, so discouraged the Aberdonians that they abandoned the bridge, and dispersed for safety in different directions. Colonel Gun had not ridden far up the river before he received the news, and telling his men that Johnston was killed and the bridge lost, he ordered them to return to Aberdeen. One of the Gordons pressed him to make a stand and attack the Covenanters as they crossed the bridge, telling him it was not the custom of Huntly's family to leave the field without fighting the enemy. But with his usual threat that he would throw up his command unless his orders were obeyed, he refused to charge, and when one of the indignant Gordons told him to his face that he was a villain and a traitor, "he swallowed all very quietly," says the family chronicler. The story as we have it is all from Gun's enemies, but the facts prove pretty clearly that if not treacherous he was strangely incapable and unlucky. Aboyne and his party finally rode off to Strathbogie, leaving Aberdeen to shift for itself.

It was late in the afternoon when Montrose crossed the bridge and moved on towards the unfortunate town, which was once more in his power. His troops, exasperated by the

obstinate resistance they had met with, were eager to sack and burn the town. Earl Marischal and Lord Frazer of Muchalls urged him to carry out the warrant of the Committee to that effect. But Montrose, always temperate and merciful in the hour of victory, answered that it was best to advise a night upon it. He reminded them that Aberdeen was the London of the north, and suggested that its destruction might in the end injure their own party. He was resolved to save the fair city, and not trusting to the effect of persuasive words alone, he refused to allow the eager and excited soldiery to enter Aberdeen that evening. They were encamped in the fields, to the astonishment and relief of the trembling citizens, who were expecting the Covenanters to take a dire revenge upon them for the sturdy fight they had made at the bridge.

The next morning the very noblemen who had only the night before been so hot for the destruction of the loyal city were as eager to spare it. This was just what Montrose wished. He told them that he was perfectly ready to comply with their request, but as he knew that he should be severely blamed for such lenity, he made them draw up and sign a paper to the effect that they had hindered him from carrying out the known wishes of the authorities at Edinburgh. Time proved that this precaution was not unnecessary, and that he was right in believing he would be called to account for acting with common humanity towards the town and inhabitants of Aberdeen.

The next day tidings came by sea that the King had come to terms with the Covenanters at Berwick, whereupon Montrose disbanded his small army and rode southwards.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PACIFICATION OF BERWICK

"Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, untterrified,  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;  
Nor numbers nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind."  
*Paradise Lost.*

THE Pacification of Berwick—signed on the 18th of June 1639, the day on which Montrose forced the passage of the Dee—was in its results fatal to the royal cause. The treaty was—to use the words of Hallam—"indefinite, enormous in concession, yet affording a pretext for new encroachment." Not that Charles, embarrassed as he was with home troubles, was likely to attempt any new encroachment, but his declaration at Berwick contained a clause in which he refused to ratify all the proceedings of the "late pretended Assembly at Glasgow"—the Assembly which had persisted in sitting after the departure of the Royal Commissioner, and which had not only taken upon itself to excommunicate the Bishops and expel them all from their seats in Parliament, but had formally declared Episcopacy to be unlawful in itself. The words "pretended Assembly" gave great offence to the leaders of the Kirk, and the whole clause was interpreted by the Covenanters to mean that the King would, if he could, reverse those measures enacted at Glasgow, which the chief agitators assumed to be essential to the preservation and purity of religion.

However indefinite in some points the Treaty of Berwick may have been, it contained at least one clear stipulation. Both armies were to be disbanded; the Scots within forty-eight hours after the declaration was published; the King's when the royal forts and castles which had been held by the Covenanters were given up to him. The Scots pretended to disband at once, but in reality they kept nearly all their



officers, and many of their men in pay, still retaining possession of the royal forts. Charles remonstrated and protested in vain. He was met by the plausible answers which Argyll and Loudon knew so well how to frame, and by the publication of a document containing an explanation of the treaty from the covenanting point of view. Charles, fully backed up by the English Commissioners, who had been present at the signing of the treaty, declared this document to be "in most parts full of falsehood, dishonour and scandal to His Majesty's proceedings in the late Pacification." By way of response he was loudly assailed from the Scottish pulpits as a truce-breaker, and the people were taught to believe that he was not to be trusted.

The triumph of the Covenanters was greater than anything they could have dreamed of. They had obtained, without fighting, all that they had asked for. They had ingratiated themselves with many influential persons about the English Court, and they had immensely increased their credit in foreign countries, so that they had no longer any difficulty in procuring arms and ammunition from abroad. But these triumphs rather fed than satisfied their rapidly growing desires, and within a fortnight all hopes of a peaceful settlement through the Treaty of Berwick were dashed to the ground. Early in July the new Royal Commissioner, Lord Traquair, was attacked in the streets of Edinburgh with such fury that he escaped with difficulty from the hands of the mob. Lord Loudon went to Berwick to try to explain away the outrage, but the King was not satisfied, and sent back a message by him, requiring Argyll, Cassilis, and a dozen other noblemen who had taken a leading part in the proceedings of the past year, to attend him at Berwick. Montrose, Rothes and Lothian were the only three who obeyed their Sovereign's command. The rest sent a long paper of reasons why they could not or would not come, implying pretty clearly that it would not be safe for them to put themselves into the King's power.

Charles was justly offended, and announced at once that he gave up his intention of being present in the Parliament promised by the Treaty of Berwick, since it was not reasonable that he should trust his person in the power of those who

so plainly expressed their distrust of him. Nothing could have better pleased the ruling Covenanters than this unfortunate decision of the King's; for they were well aware that it would be far easier to carry out the ends they contemplated in his absence, and it is not improbable that the insult was of Argyll's contriving and meant to effect this very purpose. Singularly wanting as he was in personal courage, he can hardly, in this instance, have felt any real fear that Charles would venture to detain, or in any way injure, fourteen of the leading nobles of Scotland.

Montrose arrived at Berwick on the 18th of July and stayed there six days. It would be interesting to know with what feelings the King and the Earl regarded each other at this critical meeting. Little more than three years had passed since that first introduction, which, under Hamilton's unfriendly management, had drawn a thick veil of prejudice and misunderstanding between Sovereign and subject, and everything that had passed during those eventful years had tended to widen the estrangement. Montrose came to the presence-chamber fresh from his successful campaign against the King's friends in the north, and in Charles's mind there lingered Hamilton's half-contemptuous description of the young noble who had been so "forward in show" amongst the Covenanters. But whatever prejudice may have been in the King's mind as the future champion of his throne stood before him on that summer day at Berwick, he gave Montrose a most gracious reception, and before they parted the feeling of personal distrust which had created so strong a barrier between them had vanished at once and for ever.

Charles I. possessed to the full that power of magnetic attraction which belonged to so many of his ill-fated race. Baillie the Covenanter, in the midst of the rebellion, wrote of him that "His Majesty was ever the longer, the better loved of all that heard him, as one of the most just, reasonable, sweet persons they had ever seen"; and even Oliver Cromwell was not less favourably impressed when he became personally acquainted with Charles. Montrose, combining as he did with singular clearness of judgment an almost romantic enthusiasm, was specially susceptible to the



personal charm of the King, who, on his part, could not fail to be struck by the unmistakable straightforwardness of Montrose and by the stately courtesy of his bearing.

It has been taken for granted by some modern writers that during this conference Charles induced Montrose to forsake his party and to become an instrument of the Court. But it would be as unreasonable to call Hyde and Falkland traitors to their cause as to assert that after this interview, or in consequence of it, Montrose cast off the patriotic principles which had hitherto actuated him. Undoubtedly those five or six days of personal intercourse with his Sovereign had a powerful and a perfectly legitimate influence upon the after life of the young Earl. He now for the first time saw the other side of the shield. He found that the King had grievances as well as the people, and he began to believe that Charles honestly meant to act for the good of his subjects.

The King was at this moment placed in a painful and humiliating position. The expedition to Scotland, conducted on so grand and costly a scale, had failed utterly and disgracefully. The insolent refusal of the Scottish nobles to repair to Berwick was both a proof of this failure and a gross affront to Charles's honour. He keenly felt the insult, and Montrose was too generous and warm-hearted not to sympathize deeply with the King's wounded feelings; nor could he fail to regard with contempt the cowardice, real or assumed, of his fellow nobles, who declined to trust themselves in their Sovereign's power. The young Earl—he was twenty-six years old when this meeting took place—returned to Scotland with his loyalty quickened into energy by a feeling of warm personal liking for King Charles, but his political opinions remained unchanged. He still distrusted many of the men who surrounded the King and influenced his course of action, and he would again have opposed with all his might such arbitrary measures as those which had been the beginning of the troubles.

But such measures had long ceased to come from the King and his Ministers. The oppression under which the country already groaned came from the other side, and Montrose, who hated tyranny from whatever side it came, found himself in a difficult position. He could not



help seeing that some at least of his colleagues—and those the most influential amongst them—were very far from being actuated by motives of pure and unselfish patriotism, and though the clerical leaders of the movement were unquestionably sincere, their narrow bigotry, their spirit of bitter persecution, equally alienated his sympathies. His ideal was widely different from theirs, and it was absolutely impossible for him to continue to act harmoniously with such men as those who were at this time working the machinery of the Scottish Covenant. Hitherto his work had been chiefly in the field, active and exciting work, bringing with it the stimulus of open opposition and danger. But now it was necessary to appeal to the decision of reason, in order to re-establish, if possible, on a firm basis the political constitution which had been so rudely shaken by the violence of both parties.

The first questions that were brought forward at the opening of the new Parliament on the last day of August 1639 prove how strong the revolutionary current had become. The Covenanters were at once confronted with a difficulty of their own making; they had expelled the bishops, so that one Estate of the realm was wanting, and much discussion arose as to how the vacancy should be filled up. When the question was put to the vote it was carried by a small majority, that Parliament without any reference to the King should nominate fourteen persons to take the places of the absent prelates, and though Traquair, the Commissioner, protested against so violent an assumption of power, his opposition was disregarded, and the House went on to propose other aggressive measures, which directly attacked some of the long-established prerogatives of the Crown. The King's comment on these proceedings was, that "he perceived nothing would give them content but the alteration of the whole frame of government in that kingdom, with the total overthrow of the royal authority," words which were completely and rapidly verified.

Montrose acted and voted with the minority in this Parliament. All that the Covenant asked for had been conceded. The prelates were removed, the Court of High Commission abolished; the religion of Scotland was free and in

the hands of her recognised tribunals. According to his view, it now remained to make a wise and moderate use of the advantages they had gained, and to carry out the solemn promise sworn to in the Covenant, "not to attempt anything that might turn . . . to the diminution of the King's greatness and authority." He was therefore prepared to oppose with all his strength an intemperate and ungenerous use of their victory, and as in a revolution moderation is always looked upon with suspicion, it began at once to be whispered that he was no longer faithful to the Cause. One morning he found a paper fastened to his chamber door, bearing the words, "*Invictus armis, verbis vincitur.*" The accusation needs no refutation, for almost every man who has had the strength and courage to stop short at a settled point in the headlong progress of a revolutionary movement has been exposed to the same kind of calumny. The innuendo, from whatever quarter it came, had no effect upon Montrose's conduct, and as freedom of speech and action were not yet entirely stifled in Scotland, he continued steadily to oppose the violent and unconstitutional measures which were pushed rapidly forward by the leading politicians in Edinburgh.

Both the General Assembly and the Parliament, not satisfied with abolishing Episcopacy throughout Scotland, a measure to which the King had given his reluctant assent, went on to declare that form of Church government to be unlawful in itself and contrary to the Word of God. Traquair, the Commissioner, ratified this act, to the intense distress of the King when the facts became known to him—for he felt that he could not, as a sincere member of the Church of England, sign a document containing such a statement. Modern historians have scoffed at his scruples, and have even treated his refusal to perjure himself on this occasion as an evidence of slipperiness and insincerity. The Covenanters were greatly aggrieved by Charles's refusal to ratify the acts as long as they contained the objectionable declaration referred to, for, like most bigots, they had no respect for other people's consciences, though they claimed unlimited indulgence for their own.

Parliament was prorogued, but not before an Act had been



passed for the compulsory imposition of the Covenant, under heavy penalties, upon the whole kingdom of Scotland. This ordinance was the cause of much bitter persecution, and by it many persons were subjected to fine, imprisonment and every sort of injury. It may be asked why Montrose did not separate himself entirely from a party which acted with such gross violence and injustice. The answer is simple. Though he disapproved of much that was done in the name of the existing Government, though in 1639 he was beginning to perceive that a few of the more prominent leaders of the movement were secretly aiming at the destruction of the monarchy, hoping thereby to increase their own power, he was yet persuaded that the majority of his countrymen were, like himself, in favour of such a moderate restraint of the royal prerogative as would prevent a repetition of arbitrary interference with the religion and laws of Scotland.

Montrose still remained, therefore, on the popular side, "wrestling betwixt extremities, and being most unwilling to divide from those whom he had joined in Covenant." \* These words were written by Lord Napier, in reference to the period that followed the Pacification of Berwick, and they describe well the painful and perplexing position in which many an honest and patriotic Scotsman found himself in the autumn of 1639. But though he acted as yet with the Covenanters, he vigorously resisted the extreme measures brought forward by Argyll and his partisans, and he hoped, by protesting openly against their policy, to form a moderate party strong enough to defeat the nefarious designs of the aristocratic and clerical clique which was leading Scotland blindfold. He was not unaware of the danger of his position, nor of the whispered threats of his unscrupulous opponents, that before long, by some means or other, "his sword should be taken from his side." †

In the autumn of this year a relation of Montrose, the Earl of Menteith and Airth—who, having been for some years in disgrace for having boasted himself of "redder blood" than the King, had now been restored to favour—wrote to Charles informing him of Montrose's stand in defence

\* See "The Remonstrance," *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 219.

† "Montrose's Defence, 1641," *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 362.



of the monarchy and begged His Majesty to encourage his cousin in so good a cause. In the King's reply to this letter no notice was taken of the request, but soon afterwards Montrose received an invitation to Court, and his answer to the royal letter is still in existence. In it he writes that the mere report of the invitation caused such "jealousies" that he considered it best to stay in Scotland. But he hoped His Majesty would do him the honour to think that this was no mere shift or excuse, "for all of that kind was too much contrary to his humour," and he ended by declaring that he was "ever ready to obey His Majesty's commands, persuading himself that they would always be such as befitted, and suited to all most incumbent duties."

The cautious wording of the letter indicates that Montrose was not perfectly sure that it would be safe to trust the King unconditionally with the liberties of Scotland while the royal policy was under the guidance and control of a man like Strafford, and the concluding paragraph implies, in courteous phrase, that the writer, though a loyal subject, was no professor of the doctrine of passive obedience. This was not the last occasion on which Montrose asserted that even the duty of obedience to lawful authority must be subject to the just claims of honour and conscience.

The Covenanters were so much strengthened by the proceedings of the Parliament and General Assembly of 1639 that they were able to enforce submission to their orders all over Scotland. They levied large contributions for the support of their army, quartered troops on loyal towns, and imposed the Covenant on the whole country, willing or unwilling. One of their methods of raising money deserves mention. The inhabitants of a parish or district were asked for a voluntary contribution to the "good cause," every one, rich or poor, man or woman, being requested to give something. If any individual refused, his name was given up to the authorities, who by this time were all in the covenanting interest, and the defaulter was pretty certain to have reason before long to repent his lack of liberality.

1640 The loyalist district of which Aberdeen was the centre suffered more than any other part of Scotland from the tyranny of this usurped authority. Earl Marischal was

again in command, but the Covenanters' rulers had taken care to give him a less merciful colleague than Montrose in Major Monro, an officer who had served in the Thirty Years' War. Monro exacted fine upon fine from the unfortunate town, seized the private property of those loyalists who had fled, forced the unwilling inhabitants to serve in his army, and plundered and destroyed the houses of the loyal lairds of the neighbourhood. Worse than all this, he permitted the soldiers to conduct themselves towards the townspeople with unbridled licence, and the local historian tells a sad tale of the shame and sorrow that befel many poor maidens of the lower class, and of the heavy punishment visited upon them after the departure of the troops by the rigid rulers of the new *régime*. Strathbogie, the domain of the Marquis of Huntly, fared even worse than Aberdeen. Monro and his troops "left that country almost manless, moneyless, houseless and armless."

In every parish the Covenant was systematically imposed, upon the clergy first, and then upon the laity. Those who refused to sign were punished so heavily with fine and imprisonment that very few had the strength to stand out for more than a year or two. The non-subscribing ministers suffered most severely, for they were suspended from their sacred office, deprived of their living, and in many cases reduced to starvation.

Here is one of many instances of oppression related by Spalding. On the 2nd of June 1640, Mr John Gregory, minister of Drumoak, was brought to Monro by a party of soldiers, who had taken him at night out of his "naked bed," and "pityfully plundered his house." He was imprisoned in the house of Skipper Anderson. No one, not even his wife, was allowed to have private conference with him, and five musketeers, whose expenses he was forced to pay, watched him day and night. He was at last set at liberty on paying a thousand marks to Monro for standing out against the Covenant, but the following month he was deprived of his living, and when all was done he was forced to subscribe.

Even a rash expression of dislike to the existing state of things was liable to be severely punished. A poor old



weaver of Aberdeen, above seventy years of age, hearing that one of the soldiers quartered on the district had been accidentally drowned, said hastily that "he wished all the rest would go that gait." He was forthwith carried off to prison and made to ride the "wooden mare," a cruel instrument of punishment which Monro had introduced from Germany. It is easy to understand how the accounts from the north, with their tales of violence, injustice and oppression, must have excited the disapproval and indignation of Montrose, but he was helpless to prevent such doings. He was sharing the experience of all young and ardent spirits who, from one century to another, have thrown themselves, with the best of motives, into revolutionary movements which, starting with the fairest professions and the most moderate demands, soon leave these behind, and plunging deep into crime and error end by inflicting worse wrongs and a heavier oppression than any they once promised to redress.

All in vain did Montrose and the small party of Moderates, who were willing to follow his lead, continue to urge that the main objects of the Covenant were already attained, and that the rest could be best secured by peaceful and loyal methods. Everything pointed to a renewal of war, and the army was being quietly put into a state of efficiency under the clever management of Field-Marshal Leslie. There had already been a little desultory fighting between the town and the castle of Edinburgh, the latter being held for the King. Some ineffectual attempts at reconciliation were made, and on one occasion Montrose, by direction of the Estates, went to the castle and requested General Ruthven to give up the crown and sceptre which were in his keeping, that the royal insignia might not be wanting at the approaching opening of Parliament, but the General met the demand with a stout refusal. The Estates then caused a few lines to be written, charging him, on pain of death, to surrender the royal symbols within forty-eight hours, and the summons, being wrapped round an arrow head, was shot over the castle wall; but Ruthven took no notice of it, and continued to fire occasional shots, with the object of frightening the citizens into supplying provisions to the garrison. Little harm was done to the town, but two or three persons were killed, and the inhabi-



tants were afraid to walk in those streets which were within range of the cannon.

Parliament was to re-open on the 2nd of June 1640, but the Royal Commissioner, Lord Traquair, had, for some undiscoverable cause, become an object of virulent hatred to the Earl of Rothes, Archibald Johnston and other leaders of the faction, and as it was not safe for him to attend, the King commissioned the Justice-Clerk and Sir Thomas Hope to prorogue the session. On pretence of some slight informality in the royal order, Sir Thomas was easily persuaded that "the Parliament could not be prorogued for want of Commissioners," and the Covenanters practically defying the King, elected Lord Burleigh as their President, and opened the session on the appointed day. Montrose alone had the courage to offer a spirited opposition to the illegal proceedings of the Parliament. He urged that it was unlawful to hold a Parliament without the presence of the King or of some person commissioned by His Majesty to take his place, and some of the younger nobility appear to have been inclined to follow his lead. But Argyll, Balmerino and Archibald Johnston met his straightforward remonstrance with the sophistries which they well knew how to use, and he was over-ruled by numbers.

The Estates sat from the 2nd till the 12th of June inclusive, and before they rose they had improved upon the old Tables of the Covenant by creating a permanent "Committee of Estates" of most heterogeneous composition. It consisted of forty persons of all ranks and degrees, from earls down to tailors. Montrose's name was put upon the list, which included also several other members of the Moderate party, but being hopelessly outnumbered by the violent and thorough-going partisans of the Covenant, they were in no position to counteract the designs of Argyll and his clique. Argyll himself was not upon the Committee, and he gained credit for not putting himself forward; but he was all the more powerful for remaining outside, and it was well understood that he was the moving spring of the irreconcilables. Still, he was not content with his position. He wished to be the acknowledged ruler of Scotland, and there is evidence to show that he consulted several of the leading

lawyers and divines in Edinburgh as to whether a king might, under certain circumstances, be deposed. The opinion he obtained, though cautiously worded, was favourable to his wishes, and he at once began to prepare the way for his own elevation by circulating private bonds, in one of which it was proposed that he should be nominated supreme ruler north of the Forth.

In the summer of 1640 Montrose was privately asked to affix his signature to the bond which contained this startling proposition. He answered, as might have been expected, "I would rather die than sign it." The document appeared to him to offer distinct evidence of a dangerous conspiracy against the monarchy, and his suspicions were strengthened by other facts that came to his knowledge; facts which clearly showed that Argyll's friends and clansmen were prepared to support him in designs which threatened the liberties of the country and the lawful authority of the King.

It was not in Montrose's nature to remain passive or inactive under such circumstances. He began at once to take measures to bring to light the secret machinations of Argyll, but he was utterly unfitted for the work of a detective, and his desire not to be unfair, even to one whom he now looked upon as a secret traitor, made the process of investigation difficult.



## CHAPTER X

### CROSSING THE TWEED

"Argyle, he has ta'en a hundred of his men,  
A hundred men and mairly,  
And he's awa on yon green shaw,  
To plunder the bonnie house of Airlie."

THE Scottish army, consisting of about twenty thousand foot 1640 and two thousand five hundred horse, was ready to march by the middle of June. Its nominal object was humbly to petition His Majesty that he would ratify the Acts of the late Parliament, which could not indeed be legally called a Parliament till it had received the royal sanction. Montrose commanded two regiments in this army, but he was absent when it was decided that General Leslie should lead it to the Border. The Covenanters were anxious to leave all safe behind them, and though Monro's exertions in the north had made them feel secure so far as the Aberdeen district was concerned, Angus had lately shown signs of disturbance, and Airlie Castle was still a royalist stronghold.

The Earl of Airlie had gone to England in order to avoid being pressed to sign the Covenant, but he had left his eldest son, Lord Ogilvie—a brave and spirited young man—in charge of the castle. Montrose being ordered by the Estates to bring that part of the country into order, the business was accomplished with little difficulty and no bloodshed. In a personal interview with Lord Ogilvie, Montrose requested that the castle should be surrendered to the public service. This demand was at once complied with, and no injury was done to the house or its owners. Montrose wrote to Argyll that Airlie was garrisoned for the public, and that the surrounding country was quiet and peaceable; but the intelligence was most unwelcome to the great western potentate, whose strong personal enmity against the Ogilvies made him resolve that they should not escape so easily.

Argyll had already procured for himself from the Committee of Estates an order of fire and sword against the Earls

of Athole and Airlie, including the whole district where their influence was acknowledged, and on the 18th of June he marched from Inverary with a numerous following of his own clansmen, and "a pretty camp and cannon." So much was this visitation dreaded by the inhabitants—Covenanters and anti-Covenanters alike—that they entreated Montrose to delay his march to the south and to allow his regiments to remain for their protection till Argyll's expedition through the shires of Perth and Angus had passed by. The town of Perth sent a letter to the Estates, begging that "these regiments might be kept in the country till the Highlanders were past." \* The request appears to have been granted, but Argyll would not submit to be deprived of an opportunity of wreaking his vengeance upon the Ogilvies.

**July** Taking no notice of Montrose's letter, he marched straight upon Airlie, plundered it of all that could be carried off within and without, broke and destroyed all the rest, and finally burnt the castle down to the ground. There is a story that he was seen with a hammer in his hand knocking to pieces the carved work of the doors and windows. This is perhaps an embellishment of tradition, but that the story is true, in the spirit if not in the letter, is clearly proved by the following instructions written by Argyll to his clansman, Dugald Campbell of Inverawe: "See how ye can cast off the iron gattes and windows, and take down the roof, and if ye find it will be longsome, ye shall fire it well, that so it may be destroyed." Fearing that such ruthless destruction would bring discredit upon him, if it were known that his own hand had been in it, he tried to throw the blame on the well-known fierceness of his wild followers, and added to his instructions this characteristic sentence: "But ye need not let know that ye have directions from me to fire it." Every building upon the estate was destroyed, the cattle and corn carried off, and what could not be taken away was burnt. So fell the "bonnie house of Airlie."

Forthar, another country house of the Ogilvies, though not fortified, received the same treatment, and Lady Ogilvie, who was expecting her confinement at the time, was turned out of doors. A cousin of the Earl of Airlie, who had also in

\* "Defence of Montrose against the libel of 1641," *Memorials*.



past times been at feud with the Campbells, had a house in the neighbourhood, and Argyll, seizing the opportunity to pay off old debts, sent a party of his men to demolish the place. But the officer in command, finding only a sick gentlewoman and a few servants in the house, returned to tell his chief that as it was a mere private dwelling, without defence or fortification of any kind, he had not destroyed it. Argyll angrily rebuked him for not obeying orders, and sent him back to spoil the house, repeating, as he turned away, a Latin sentence from the Psalms, which was a favourite quotation with him: "*Abscindantur qui nos perturbant.*" ("Let those be cut off who trouble us.")

There followed an encounter between Argyll and the Earl of Athole, from which sprang most serious consequences both to Montrose and to the royal cause. No conflict occurred. The Chief of the Campbells contrived to inveigle Athole, with several of his principal clansmen, into his camp by fair promises, and detained them there until he had sufficiently worked upon his prisoners' fears to induce them to sign the Covenant. Argyll, however, had further aims. During the Earl's detention in the camp of the Campbells at the Ford of Lyon, he was allowed to glean hints of ambitious schemes which had hitherto been kept secret. There was strange talk concerning the possible deposition of the King and the appointment of some kind of successor. Argyll told Athole that some of his own ancestors had been Earls of Athole—implying that the claim might be revived—and he asserted that he himself was the "eighth man from Robert the Bruce." His clansmen sang songs in Gaelic, praising Argyll as the man who would take the crown by force, and they declared that they were no longer King Stewart's men but King Campbell's. Expressions like these, treasonable as they sounded in the ears of the royalist captives, might have been taken for the mere bombast and bravado of the wild Highland men, but the words took a graver meaning when they were supported by written bonds, planning a dictatorship in Scotland independent of the King; Argyll being of course the suggested dictator.

Argyll's visitation of fire and sword was not yet at an end. He marched through Lochaber, plundering, burning, and spoiling the country of the clans hostile to the Campbells,

and when at length he departed he left behind him a legacy of fierce hatred and revenge which was to recoil at no distant period upon himself and his clan. Not satisfied with the destruction he had brought upon the Ogilvies, he was eager to punish Montrose for having stood for a time between him and his foes, and he accused the Earl, who was by this time with the army in the south, of having dealt too leniently with the loyal houses in Angus. Montrose defended himself against this charge before a military committee, presided over by General Leslie, and obtained without difficulty a full and formal approval of his actions on the occasion referred to. He had not, however, heard the last of the matter, for a year later it was raked up against him, and was transformed, under Archibald Johnston's manipulation, into an accusation of treasonable dealing with the enemy. Lord Ogilvie was closely examined on the subject, and his depositions \* (still extant) give the clearest possible evidence of Montrose's straightforward and honourable conduct.

At the very same time that Montrose was securing for himself exoneration from the charge of too great lenity, Argyll was applying for one of an entirely opposite kind. He considered it advisable to ward off from himself and his heirs the possible consequences of his late excesses in Angus and Lochaber, and to this end he obtained an indemnity—which was made to run in the name of “our Sovereign Lord King Charles” and the Estates of Parliament—exempting him and his heirs from all penalties due “for any violence whatsoever done to the liberty of the subject, or freedom taken with their property, houses, or castles; for burning the same or putting fire thereinto, or otherwise destroying the same howsoever, or by putting whatsoever person or persons to torture or question, or of putting any person or persons to death at any time betwixt the 18th day of June 1640 and the said 2nd day of August next thereafter.”

The document suggests a vivid picture of oppression and cruelty, and the facts referred to are enough to account for the inextinguishable hatred felt for many a long day by these Highlanders towards the Campbells and their grim chief. A more striking commentary upon the contrasting characters

\* *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 264.



of Montrose and Argyll than that which<sup>is</sup> presented by the two exonerations can hardly be imagined.

On the 20th of August the Scots arrived at the Tweed, and as the current ran strong and rapid, the passage was supposed to be dangerous, and there was some hesitation as to who should cross first. The custom of casting lots prevailed amongst the Covenanters. The practice found favour with the ministers because it sounded Biblical, and the cautious old General encouraged it as a convenient way of settling matters of choice and precedence amongst the proud and easily offended noblemen under his command. On this occasion the lot fell upon Montrose, who with cheerful alacrity at once dashed waist deep through the stream and returning to encourage his men, led the army safely through. It was remarked that the only soldier who was swept away by the current and drowned was one of his own followers.

A week later the Tyne was crossed at Newburn, in spite of Lord Conway, who had posted himself, with a body of about 4500 men, on the southern bank of the stream to dispute the passage. There was a sharp skirmish, in which from forty to fifty of the English and four or five Scots were killed and wounded. The English troopers had never before been under fire, and when they saw two or three of their number fall, killed by the enemy's cannon, they gave way and fled. The Covenanters, much astonished at their easy victory, remained that night under arms, and next day entered Newcastle, elated with success and convinced that they could without difficulty conquer the whole of England. They had, however, no wish to accomplish such an exploit, for the secret understanding which had long existed between the ruling Covenanters and the leaders of the Puritan party in the sister kingdom had fostered a strong feeling of alliance between the English and Scottish malcontents. The intruding army not only desired to be looked upon as friends by the inhabitants of the country they were invading, but they indignantly repudiated the idea that their actions could be considered contrary to the duty of loyal subjects.

Strange as it seems that men who openly disregarded the King's commands, who marched in arms against his troops and who took forcible possession of his fortresses, should per-

sist in regarding themselves as loyal and obedient subjects, it can hardly be denied that a large number of Scotsmen did, illogically but honestly, cling to this extraordinary belief. "Our intentions," wrote the leaders, "are no way against monarchical government, but that we are most loyally disposed towards our sacred Sovereign, whose personal authority we will maintain with our lives and fortunes; but that all our desires reach no farther than the preservation of our religion, and liberty of Church and Kingdom, established by the laws and constitution thereof."

One of Baillie's letters, written in reference to this subject, vividly sets forth his belief that love and loyalty to his Prince were perfectly compatible with armed rebellion against him. "Had we been ten times victorious in set battles," he wrote, "it was our conclusion to have laid down our arms at his feet, and on our knees have presented nought but our first supplications . . . we desired but to keep our own in the service of our Prince, as our ancestors had done. We loved no new master. Had the throne been void and our voices sought for the filling of Fergus's chair, we would have died ere any other had sitten down on that fatal marble but Charles alone." In another letter he speaks with honest affection of "that good Prince," his "sweet Sovereign," and pictures him as "enclosed in a prison of melancholy and discontent" by "the wicked hands of an evil faction"; and as "divided these sixteen years and more from his best-minded subjects" by "a handful of miscreants." The chief of these "miscreants" were, in the opinion of Baillie and his friends, Laud and Strafford.

Oct. An incident occurred at Berwick which put the loyal professions of the Covenanters to the test. Montrose, feeling the equivocal nature of his position, yet unwilling to give up his hopes of a final reconciliation between the principles of loyalty and liberty, wrote a private letter to the King, expressing in a few simple words his feeling of dutiful affection towards his Sovereign. The letter was stolen and copied by one of those spies in the interest of the Covenant, who were always about the royal person, and a copy was sent to Newcastle. Great excitement at once arose in the camp. Montrose was envied by some, feared by others, and his



enemies exulted in his approaching disgrace. He was known to have considerable influence with many of the younger nobles, and some of the ministers spoke as if the whole army had narrowly escaped being betrayed to the enemy. But who *was* the enemy? The inconsistency of their practice with their professions made it impossible for the Covenanters to give a clear answer to this question. Least of all could they declare that the King, "whose personal authority" they had just solemnly promised to "maintain with their lives and fortunes," was the enemy.

Montrose was summoned before the General, to defend himself against a charge which was—so it was whispered—little less than an impeachment of treason. With undisturbed composure he confronted his accusers, and frankly avowed that he had written a letter to the King, expressive of his loyalty and obedience to His Majesty, and he firmly maintained his right and that of any other subject to write such a letter. His courageous and straightforward bearing produced its natural effect, and many influential officers in the army openly sided with him. The covenanting leaders were much alarmed at what they looked upon as a divisive motion, for no party, religious or political, has ever been more intensely hostile to independence of opinion than were these ardent sticklers for their own rights of conscience. But they now found themselves in an awkward dilemma. They could not, in the face of the whole army, condemn Montrose for acting in honest accordance with those professions of personal love and loyalty to their acknowledged Sovereign which were for ever on their own lips, and as no fault could be found with the subject-matter of the letter the affair was discreetly dropped.

The incident was not forgotten. Montrose's powerful enemies knew that his unmanageable honesty and dauntless determination to act upon his convictions made him more dangerous to the success of their schemes than all their opponents put together. More clearly than any other man, Argyll perceived this rock ahead. He had by this time become the bitter though secret foe of Montrose, and with just confidence in his own craft and capacity he set himself to watch every move of his antagonist, and patiently bided his time.

## CHAPTER XI

### MONTROSE DRAWS THE LINE

“ . . . Draw the line . . .  
Somewhere ; ” “ but, Sir, your somewhere is not mine.”  
BROWNING.

1640 EARLY in September the Scottish army advanced to the line of the Tees and entered into negotiations with the King. A loyally worded petition was sent through the Earl of Lanerick, Secretary of State, and brother to the Marquis of Hamilton, and at a Conference held at Ripon both parties came to an agreement which led to a cessation of arms. The Scots were permitted to levy twenty-five thousand pounds a month from the northern counties on which they were quartered, until a treaty could be concluded.\* But the King, while giving his consent to the arrangement, declined to make the payment compulsory upon individuals. The Conference was adjourned to London, whither Baillie accompanied the Scottish Commissioners. Alexander Henderson, the Moderator of the General Assembly of 1639, and one of the prime authors of the Covenant, was a member of the Commission, and when he arrived in London, about the middle of November, people of all ranks flocked to hear the great Scottish preacher. The Long Parliament was sitting, and many members of both houses warmly welcomed the successful Covenanters as friends and allies. Strafford was already in the Tower, and Laud's turn was soon to come.

The demands of the Scots rose rapidly, and went far beyond those contained in the petition presented to the King by Lanerick only a few weeks earlier. They now asked for three hundred thousand pounds to pay the expenses of the army with which they had invaded England. They demanded further that the King should resign to Parliament his right to appoint the members of his own Privy Council,

\* Gardiner, *Fall of the Monarchy*, vol. i. p. 441.



the Judges, and all Officers of State in Scotland. It may reasonably be conjectured that the Scots were encouraged in these extravagant requisitions by their friends, the leaders of the English Puritan party, who cared very little about heaping taxation upon the country if they could thus entangle the King in fresh difficulties.

It is not easy to see how these demands of the Scots could be reconciled with the loyal professions of the Covenant, in which they had declared before God and man that they had no intention nor desire to attempt anything that might turn . . . to the diminution of the King's greatness and authority. Montrose did not forget nor ignore this part of his "solemn oath and Covenant," and while he was stationed with the army in the north he expressed alike to friend and foe his entire disapproval of the new encroachments upon the royal prerogative.

But the chief demand of the Covenanters, the one they had most at heart, was the entire overthrow of Episcopacy in England and the erection of a rigid Presbyterian Government in its stead throughout the length and breadth of the land. They announced their modest intention in the following flowery terms: "In the Paradise of Nature the diversity of flowers and herbs are useful, but in the Paradise of the Church different and contrary religions are unpleasant and hurtful; it is therefore to be wished that there were one Confession of Faith; one form of Catechism, one Directory for the parts and public worship of God, as prayer, praying, administration of the Sacraments, etc., and one Form of Church Government, in all the Churches of His Majesty's dominions."

Apparently they failed to perceive that the same reasoning completely justified the King's attempt, three years earlier, to bring about in far more moderate fashion this same desirable result. The only difference between their enterprise and that of King Charles was, that he wished to bring the smaller and less settled Church into conformity with the larger one, while the Scots were set upon forcing the Church of the many to conform in every minute particular to the opinion and practice of the Church of the few. Neither can it be denied that the Scottish attempt to overthrow by main

force the Church of England, and to impose on an unwilling country their own narrow religious system, was infinitely more tyrannical, both in purpose and in method, than anything that had been proposed by the King and Laud in the same mistaken pursuit of uniformity. Looking to the comparative lawfulness of the two attempts, it may certainly be argued that the King had at least some claim to administer the public affairs of Scotland, but who can affirm that the Scots had any right whatever to interfere with the order and government of the English Church?

Montrose plainly expressed his disapproval of the demand for the abolition of Episcopacy in England, and asserted that it was "contrary to the mind of the most part of the subscribers of the National Covenant." It is a standing accusation against him that he changed sides in the great struggle, and no one will deny that he did in truth leave the stronger party to join the weaker one. But it has been further assumed that in making this change he deserted his former principles. In order to judge whether this charge is just it may be well to compare his conduct up to this point with that of Baillie, one of the most honest of those Covenanters with whom Montrose has been sometimes unfavourably contrasted.

In 1638 Baillie was friendly to bishops, and approved of Episcopal Government. In 1639, with some scruples of conscience, he voted for the exclusion from Parliament of all the Scottish bishops, and for the total abolition of Episcopacy in Scotland. In 1640 it was the object of his prayers and his life to root Episcopacy out of England, where it had always been firmly established. Again, in 1638, he signed a Covenant which solemnly protested against the least infraction of the King's prerogative; whilst in 1640 he was ready to support and encourage the fatal blows dealt by Parliament to the royal authority.

The most careful scrutiny of Montrose's career will fail to detect in his political opinions such startling changes as these. He refused in Scotland—as Falkland, Hyde and many others afterwards refused in England—to be carried into intemperate extremes by the strong current of revolutionary feeling; but unless, in times of violent and rapid change, none are to be accounted honest except those



who allow themselves to be swept unresistingly along by the fierce wave of popular excitement, Montrose was justified in stopping short when freedom to Church and Parliament had been fully conceded. He was justified in loyally standing by the threatened monarchy when he found that in the Council Chamber of the Covenanters law and loyalty were alike disregarded, and that to continue to act with them would be to follow a course sure to end either in anarchy or in some irresponsible tyranny.

Besides the uprooting of Episcopacy, there was another object, equally disapproved of by Montrose, which the Covenanters were exceedingly anxious to obtain. This was the exclusion of Traquair the Treasurer, Sir Robert Spottiswoode the President of the Scottish Privy Council, and a few other prominent loyalists, from the Act of Oblivion which was to be included in the Treaty. The King, naturally indignant at so dishonourable a condition, declared that if they insisted upon excluding from the benefit of the Act any of his partisans he would exclude some on their side. He also expressed his intention of being present at the Parliament which was to reassemble at Edinburgh in the following summer. Archibald Johnston wrote of these projects as "this plot of reserving some of us, and this plot of causing the King to declare his intention to go home to Scotland," and he attributed both to the suggestion of some members of his own party, referring without doubt to Montrose and his friends.

It may be observed in passing that it was the custom of the Covenanters in Scotland, and of the Puritan party in England, to designate every plan and project of their opponents as "plots," and to this may be attributed much of the popular belief in later days that the King was an inveterate plotter. The instance before us is a case in point. There was no shadow of a plot in Charles's purpose to visit Scotland; but Johnston was not mistaken in supposing that Montrose had counselled the King to be present at the approaching Parliament, and that he was also exerting himself to defeat the disloyal and ambitious schemes of the faction—small in number, but strong in talent and influence—of which Argyll was the head and Archibald Johnston an important member.

Since the discovery of those private bonds in favour of Argyll, referred to in the last chapter, Montrose had been more than ever anxious to form a combination of loyal and moderate men to hold in check the ambitious designs of that great self-seeker, and to oppose demands which had already gone far beyond the terms and objects originally proposed by the Covenant. For this purpose he and Lord Napier drew up a short agreement, or bond of union, to which they easily procured a number of influential signatures. But in November Lord Boyd, a young nobleman who had signed the bond, was taken seriously ill, and before he died he let fall a few words about it. These words by some means came to the ears of Argyll, who did not rest till he had ferreted out the whole matter. He lost no time in laying it before the Covenant in Committee in Edinburgh, and Montrose was at once summoned, with the other nobles concerned, to answer for the offence, which was at the first onset considered to be of so grave a nature that some of the more violent among the clergy declared that death would not be too severe a punishment.

Montrose came up to Edinburgh and at once produced the bond. It ran as follows:

“Whereas we under subscribers, out of our duty to Religion, King and Country, were forced to join ourselves in a Covenant for the maintenance and defence of either, and every one of other in that behalf: Now finding how that by the particular and indirect practising of a few, the Country and Cause now depending does so much suffer, do heartily hereby bind and oblige ourselves, out of our duty to all these respects above-mentioned, but chiefly and namely that Covenant already signed, to wed and study all public ends which may tend to the safety both of Religion, Laws, and Liberties of this poor Kingdom, and as we are to make an account before that Great Judge at the last day, that we shall contribute one with another, in a unanimous and joint way, in whatsoever may concern the Public or this Cause, to the hazard of our lives, fortunes and estates, neither of us doing, consulting, nor condescending in any point, with-



out the consent and approbation of the whole, in so far as they can be conveniently had, and time may allow. And likeas we swear and protest by the same oath, that in so far as may consist with the good and weal of the public, every one of us shall join and adhere to the other's and their interests, against all persons and causes whatsoever, so that what shall be done to one, with reservation aforesaid, shall be equally resented, and taken as done to the whole number. In witness hereof, etc." "The subscribers of the principal bond and in this order:

"Marschell, Montrose, Wigton, Kinghorn, Home, Athol, Mar, Perth, Boyd, Galloway, Stormont, Seaforth, Erskine, Kirkcudbright, Almond, Drummond, Johnston, Lour, D. Carnegie, Master of Lour." \*

As nothing in this bond could, by any twisting or turning, be pronounced treasonable, the covenanting Committee could only censure it as a "divisive movement," and require Montrose to surrender it. He obeyed, and it was burnt; **Dec.** a method of proceeding which answered the ends of Argyll and his faction much better than if the paper had been published; for by dark hints of the dangerous nature of Montrose's bond, many both in England and Scotland were led to believe that it was a wicked and treasonable plot against the cause of Religion and Liberty, whilst more than one modern historian has taken Baillie's word for it that it was a "damnable bond," though it does not appear that Baillie had seen it when he thus described it.

The premature discovery and destruction of the Cumbernauld Bond, as it was called, was a great blow to Montrose's hopes of forming an honest constitutional party amongst his countrymen, but even as it was it did not altogether fail of its end. For it revealed the existence of an opposition which would make it dangerous, if not impossible, to establish the new scheme of government which Argyll had been contemplating, and "King Campbell" knew that he was, for the time at least, defeated.

Two papers, written by Montrose just at this juncture, **1641** have been preserved, and between them they give a singularly

\* *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 254.

clear and complete idea of his political opinions, and of the aims and motives by which he was actuated.

The first is a long and elaborate essay—in the form of a letter to some unknown person addressed as Noble Sir\*—the subjects discussed being the rights and responsibilities of rulers, and the obedience due from subjects, with special reference to the condition of Scotland at the outbreak of the Civil War. In the essay Montrose affirms that the sovereign power, “that which is sovereign over free subjects—is still one and the same in points essential, wherever it be, whether in the person of a monarch, or in a few principal men, or in the estates of the people”; that it “is a power *over* the people, instituted by God for his glory and the temporal and eternal happiness of men.” The writer demonstrates at some length the dangers of absolute power on the one hand; of unchecked licence on the other; and he maintains that the interests of kings and people must always be identical; that one can never benefit by the loss or weakness of the other. He regards frequent Parliaments as the chief safeguards of the people’s liberty under a monarchy, and he asserts that though subjects have no right to meddle with the just power and prerogative of the Prince, they are yet bound in duty to maintain the security of religion and liberty, using to that end all the means provided for them by the laws and constitution of the country. He does not omit to point out that the tyranny of one man must always be less intolerable and less permanent than the tyranny of the multitude, “where every man of power oppressteth his neighbour, without any hope of redress from a Prince despoiled of his power to punish oppressors.” The whole paper is singularly free from the narrowness and intolerance which too often characterized the political utterances of public men in the seventeenth century. The subject is carefully reasoned out and is illustrated by reference to both ancient and modern history. The chief point of difference between Montrose’s political creed and that of the degenerate Conservatism of to-day is his staunch belief in God as the One only Fount of all just power and authority. Every ruler is according to him not the mere nominee and slave of the “People,” bound to do the

\* Supposed by some to have been Drummond of Hawthornden.



will and follow the lead of those whom he pretends to govern, but the appointed servant of the Supreme Ruler, responsible to the King of Kings for the use he makes of the power entrusted to him.

The other paper is a letter of considerable length, addressed to the King. In it Montrose warns Charles that Scotland is in danger of falling away from him, and points out that "the cause is a fear and apprehension, not without some reason, of changes in religion, and that a superstitious worship shall be brought in upon it, and therewith all their laws infringed and all their liberties invaded. Free them, Sir, from this fear," he writes, "as you are free from any such thoughts, and undoubtedly you shall settle that State in a firm obedience to Your Majesty in all time coming. They have no other end but to preserve their religion in purity and their liberties entire."

He goes on to defend his countrymen from the "calumny" that they intend to overthrow monarchical government, and referring to the reverence of the people for their old line of kings, and to the extreme antiquity of the institution in Scotland, declares that it has taken such deep root that it can never be plucked up by any but the royal family itself. He urges the King's immediate presence as the only remedy for existing evils. "It is easy for you in person to settle these troubles," he affirms, "to disperse these mists of apprehension and mistaking, impossible for any other." "The success of Your Majesty's affairs, the security of your authority, the peace and happiness of your subjects, depend upon your personal presence." "Now is the proper time, and the critical days; for the people love change, and expect from it much good—a new heaven and a new earth—but being disappointed, are as desirous of a re-change to the former estate." "Satisfy them, Sir, in point of Religion and Liberties when you come there, in a loving and free manner, that they may see Your Majesty never had any other purpose, and doth not intend the least prejudice to either. For religious subjects and such as enjoy their lawful liberties obey better, and love more than the godless and servile, who do all out of base fear which begets servile hate."

At the same time he warns the King not weakly to yield

his lawful power into the hands of subjects. "Let not your authority receive any diminution of that which the law of God and Nature, and the fundamental laws of the country alloweth. For then it shall grow contemptible, and weak and miserable is that people whose Prince hath not power sufficient to punish oppression and to maintain peace and justice. On the other side, aim not at absoluteness. It endangers your estate and stirs up troubles. The people of the western parts of the world could never endure it any long time, and they of Scotland less than any." "Practise, Sir, the temperate government. It fitteth the humour and disposition of the nation best. It is most strong, most powerful, most durable of any." \*

The whole letter is thoroughly characteristic of Montrose; never failing in courtesy and reverence, yet perfectly straightforward, and containing no word of blame against any individual. It runs throughout in the same wise and temperate strain, and from first to last there is never a touch of any selfish or personal motive in the writer. As this letter and the manner in which it was sent were made by Argyll an excuse for imprisoning Montrose and those three intimate friends of his who aided him in the matter, for the whole summer of 1641, it may be well to look on a little in advance and place side by side with it the King's answer, that it may be clear to all that here was no private "practicking," no treacherous dealing between an ambitious subject and a King at enmity with his people, but an honourable and legitimate correspondence carried on for public and patriotic ends.

"MONTROSE,—I conceive that nothing can conduce more to a firm and solid peace, and giving full contentment and satisfaction to my people, than that I should be present at the next ensuing Session of Parliament. This being the reason of my journey, and having a perfect intention to satisfy my people in their religion and just liberties, I do expect from them that retribution of thankfulness, as becomes grateful and devoted subjects: Which being a business wherein not only my service, but likewise the good of the whole kingdom is so much concerned. I cannot but expect that your particular endeavours will be herein concerning.—In confidence of which, I rest your assured friend,

"CHARLES R.

"WHITEHALL, the 22nd of May 1641.  
(Addressed) 'For Montrose.'"



Montrose's letter was written not long after Christmas 1640, and was probably the result of many conferences between himself and his three friends—Lord Napier, Sir George Stirling of Keir, and Sir Archibald Stewart of Blackhall. The two former were his near kinsmen, for Keir had married his niece, Lord Napier's eldest daughter. These men had taken an active part in the exciting events of the two past years, and they were all fully agreed that the movement was going too far, or rather, that a small knot of ambitious and unscrupulous men were leading popular feeling in a wrong and dangerous direction, in order to gain their own private ends. The friends met often, sometimes at Montrose's rooms in Edinburgh, sometimes at Lord Napier's house at Merchiston, outside the city, and the subject of their talk was always by what means Scotland might be saved from the miseries of the present and the dangers of the future.

What with the unsettled state of the country, the suspension of law and justice, the vexatious and ever-growing taxation to which all property was exposed, and the ruinous condition of trade, the present looked dark enough. But they feared even worse evils in the immediate future, for they saw with strong disapproval that the royal authority was already so much shaken that unless there was before long, some turn in the tide of affairs, confusion and anarchy, or the tyranny of subjects, the most insatiable and insupportable tyranny in the world," would quickly follow.

Montrose's friends agreed with him that Charles's personal presence in Parliament would do more than anything else to remedy these disorders. But a visit from the King was precisely what Argyll and Archibald Johnston feared, and what they were resolved if possible to prevent. If Montrose had allowed these men, who, since the burning of Birnie Castle, had been his declared enemies, to know that he was writing to the King, his letter would never have been allowed to reach its destination. He was therefore obliged to take special precautions, and early in 1641 a good opportunity appeared to offer itself. A certain Lieutenant Walter Sewart, who was already going to Court on his own business, was willing to undertake the commission on payment of a small sum for his trouble. He led Montrose and Napier

to believe that he was well known to and connected with the Duke of Lennox, one of the very few honourable and loyal Scotsmen whom the King had at that time about his person. Besides entrusting Stewart with the important letter to the King, Montrose gave him one for the Duke, and desired him to endeavour to influence Lennox in favour of the King's journey to Scotland, for it was well known that there was a party at Court strongly opposed to this project. As it turned out, Stewart was a most unfit person for the commission. He was weak, flighty and indiscreet. Yet the idea that any harm or danger might arise from their employment of a man with whom they were little acquainted does not seem to have occurred even to the prudent Lord Napier.

The position of Montrose at this period was a very critical one, peculiarly painful to a man of his high spirit and singularly frank temper. He was resolved as strongly as ever to defend the religion and liberties of Scotland, but Charles had agreed to grant all that moderate men could ask or wish for; he had indeed already granted far more than had been hoped or expected in the early days of the Covenant, and though Montrose's personal acquaintance with the King was as yet very slight, his loyal and generous nature refused to harbour distrust of his Sovereign. The conscientious scruples which made Charles hesitate to sign his name to a document expressing in one of its clauses a wholesale condemnation of Episcopacy with which he could not concur, were an argument to Montrose that the King would hold himself bound by any document which he did consent to sign. Why else should he hesitate? Rothes and Argyll, on the other hand, neither understood nor respected such scruples, and judging the King by themselves, they took it for granted that if he had the power he would repudiate a distasteful obligation and punish those who had attempted to force it upon him.

While Montrose opposed fresh attacks upon the royal power, and strove with all his might for a reconciliation between King and people, he knew that he was honestly seeking the good of his country, and yet he saw that he was looked upon with suspicion, even by men whom he esteemed and respected. Such misconception was hard to bear, and



nothing but his high ideal of truth and right made it possible for him steadily to pursue his way, giving satisfaction to neither Covenanter nor Royalist, but simply following the unwavering dictates of his conscience. While he felt himself regarded with suspicion, even by old friends who had formerly trusted him implicitly, he saw Argyll—false and treacherous as he knew him to be—followed with undoubting confidence by clergy and people, many of them as loyal in intention as Montrose himself. The sting of this misguided public opinion lay in its falsehood and injustice; in its regarding honest men as plotters, selfish and ambitious schemers as honest and devoted patriots. Montrose, not yet thirty years old, was not as patient under all this misconstruction as an older and more experienced man might possibly have been, and in his desire to justify himself to his friends he was rash enough to trust at least one person, whom he ought not to have trusted, with his plans for making the whole truth clear when the King should come to Scotland.

Some time in March, Montrose was staying at Scone Abbey as the guest of Lord Stormont, in whom, as one of the subscribers to the Cumbernauld Bond, he found a congenial companion. The Earl of Athole and John Stewart of Ladywell, the chief witnesses as to what had taken place at the Ford of Lyon, met him there, and the whole party were of one mind in believing that there was sufficient evidence against Argyll to convict him of treason. Little did they understand how dexterous and dangerous was the enemy they had to contend with.

Montrose took advantage of his stay at Scone, to arrange an interview with Mr Robert Murray, the minister of Methven, who, together with Rothes, had influenced him to take part in the Covenant. The Earl was evidently feeling sore at heart at the misconstruction to which he was exposed on account of the Cumbernauld Bond, and when they met by appointment at a house in Perth, he plunged at once into the subject. "You," he said, "were an instrument of bringing me to this cause. I am calumniated and slandered as a backslider, and I desire to give you and all men satisfaction anent my carriage therein. I am wronged by the scandal raised upon the bond that was burnt." Then in answer to the

minister's questions he explained that the bond was not contrary to the Covenant, but in support of it, that it had been drawn up to unite honest men in defence of the real aims of the Covenant against the "indirect course" of a few powerful men. He explained these courses by asserting that there had been motions for deposing the King, for setting up a dictator, and for making a triumvirate, "one to rule all benorth Forth, and two besouth Forth." He told the story of the bond offered for his own signature, in which Argyll was named as ruler north of the Forth, and assured Murray that he could bring other witnesses as good as himself to prove the truth of his statement. He had heard of three other bonds to the same purport, and in all of them the name of one was prominent. That man was Argyll. He brought the conversation to a close by declaring that he meant to accuse the guilty persons in open Parliament after he had cleared himself.

Before they parted, Murray besought the Earl to "keep unity," and asked him whether or not he had meant to bring about a Session in November, in order to reverse or at least call in question those Acts, limiting the royal power, which had been passed in June in spite of his opposition. Montrose replied that as he had subscribed those Acts he was prepared to maintain them, and that the end he had in view in desiring Parliament to sit again in the autumn was to strengthen the Committee by the addition of some able men who had been left out. These questions give us a glimpse of the way in which the ruling faction at Edinburgh succeeded in discrediting their opponents—attributing to them motives and intentions which were made to appear dangerous to the welfare of the country.

On the following day Mr Murray sought another interview. He came to Scone and tried to persuade the Earl that if any such projects as those referred to in their talk of the previous day had really been entertained, they had only been conditional in case of "unavoidable extremities." This, he considered, was proved by the fact that now that the King was content to go on with the Treaty the chief men were "sweetly seeking peace."

Montrose replied that the schemes he had spoken of were not conditional but absolute. He added, that some of the



conditions now pressed on the King were contrary to the Oath of the Covenant, in which they had all sworn not to trench on the King's prerogative, and he reminded Murray that whereas, in the letter sent to Lanerick, the Scots had pledged themselves not to ask more than that letter contained, they were now bent upon extracting fresh concessions from His Majesty, and demanded that Officers of State, Council and Session should be in future chosen by Parliament instead of by the King. Murray's only answer was that all these were excellent things, if they could be had, and that if the King would not grant them the Scots would have to do without them. The minister made one more appeal for unity, by which he meant what any violent partisan means when he insists that a man should vote with his party through thick and thin, and either do without a conscience or quiet it as best he may.

The conference ended, the Earl was called to dinner, and Mr Robert Murray went his way to confide to his brother ministers, far and near, all the strange things he had heard from "my lord." His belief that the Scots would never do anything to imperil the peace upon which the hopes of the nation were set was, as Montrose had affirmed, ill-founded. The chief obstacle against the conclusion of the Treaty was the insistence by the Scottish Commissioners upon the exemption from the Act of Oblivion of some of the King's friends. Now the majority of the Committee at Edinburgh, and all the Commissioners in London, except the Earl of Rothes and Archibald Johnston, were willing to yield to the King's reasonable objection to this invidious clause. But Johnston wrote privately to Balmerino in December 1640, and in March and April 1641, urging that strict directions and commands should be sent to himself and his fellow-Commissioners to insist on the retention of the clause. These letters exhibit in a strong light the false and unscrupulous character of the man who wrote them, for at the same time that he was thus privately suggesting that the scruples of his fellow-Commissioners should be overborne by the commands he dictated, he signed his name to a letter sent from London to the Committees at Edinburgh and Newcastle, complaining that a very hard and difficult charge had been laid upon the

Commissioners in commanding them to maintain that the Act of Oblivion should cover all men and all faults on the Scottish side, while some of the most eminent of those who had adhered to the King should be still "under the lash and hazard of the Parliament's censure." What that censure might mean was just then being shown in a vivid manner in England by the case of Strafford.

In Archibald Johnston's secret correspondence of 1641 there is evidence that he was anxious to find some way of dealing effectually with Montrose's troublesome opposition, and his advice "to think what to do" with that nobleman was not thrown away upon Argyll, whose capacities for intrigue were at least equal to those of Archibald Johnston. The imprudent disclosure of the Earl's intended proceedings in the coming Parliament was an opportunity not to be let slip by his watchful foes. It gave them the very handle against him for which they had long been looking out.

The same day that the minister of Methven had been the recipient of Montrose's confidence at Scone he told the whole story to a fellow-minister, who was deeply interested in everything that concerned the Earl, and who had been near enough during the last conversation to observe that "my lord was very hot." This man was Mr John Graham, the minister of Auchterarder and Aberuthven, whose cure of souls included the inmates of Kincardine Castle. Argyll soon heard that this minister had repeated in his presbytery some serious charges against himself, and Mr John Graham was summoned before the Council. He at once gave, as his authority for the statements he had made, the minister of Methven, and a week later Murray was sent for and closely questioned. He seems to have realised that he had done an indiscreet thing in relating to others remarks that had been addressed to himself in confidence, and the situation was all the more embarrassing because Montrose himself was sitting with Argyll and other nobles at the Council Board. Seeing his hesitation, Montrose told him to speak out and not be afraid, since he must know that he could soon put the matter off his own hands.

Thus encouraged, Murray gave a full account of his two conversations with the Earl, and Montrose being himself



examined confirmed all that the minister had said. He gave Mr John Stewart of Ladywell as his authority for the statement he had made in reference to the deposing of the King, and he named Lord Lindsay of the Byres, a staunch Covenanter and friend of Argyll, as the person who had told him of the proposed dictatorship. The Earls of Mar and Cassilis, Archibald Campbell and Adam Hepburn (of Humble), were the witnesses he mentioned as able to make good his assertions respecting the treasonable bond which had been offered for his own signature. Having completed his deposition, he courteously requested that the Earl of Argyll should be asked to tell what he knew of the business.

Argyll angrily swore—though no oath was required of him—that he had never heard of such a matter, and that he would make it good that the man who spoke of his deposing the King or of his knowledge of these bonds (this was John Stewart of Ladywell) was a liar and a base . . .

The manuscript which records the depositions being destroyed by damp at this place, the missing word must be left to conjecture.

Montrose, fearing lest his enemies should put his principal witness out of the way, lost no time in sending for Stewart, who came at once to Edinburgh, and stood firmly to the truth of all the statements he had made respecting Argyll. Being summoned before the Committee, he said boldly to Argyll's face, "My lord, I heard you speak these words in Athole in presence of a great many people, whereof you are in good memory." Argyll, with much passion and "many great oaths," denied that he had ever said anything treasonable, and forthwith sent John Stewart to prison.

May 31

With Lord Lindsay, who was quite one of themselves, the Covenanters dealt differently. A quarrel with him would have been inconvenient, and they accordingly treated his conversation with Montrose very lightly. Lindsay, when examined, said that he did not remember mentioning Argyll's name in connection with a proposed dictatorship, and he was allowed to shuffle out of the charge on the pretence that "it was possible the Earl of Montrose had mistaken Lord Lindsay's expression."

As for the treasonable bond which Montrose had himself

seen, and to the existence of which he called the Earls of Mar and Cassilis, with two other well-known men of high standing amongst the Covenanters, as witnesses, no attempt was made to disprove the facts. The witnesses were never called. It was passed over in absolute silence, but Argyll was well aware that unless he could devise some way of shutting Montrose's mouth, that charge would be heard of again at a more inconvenient time than the present. There was very little time to lose; for it was already the end of May, and Parliament was to re-open in July.

John Stewart remained in prison, and was tried on a charge of leasing-making, which, properly interpreted, meant bringing false and calumnious accusations against the King, and so making mischief between him and his people. But it was much safer, as these events fully proved, to break the statute in reference to the real King than with regard to the actual revolutionary rulers of Scotland. The wretched man, who had at first shown so brave a front, was harassed day and night by threats and examinations, and it appears not improbable that on one occasion, during a night visit of Argyll to his cell, he was put to the torture. But whether the end was gained by the infliction of physical or mental suffering, his spirit was completely broken, and hopes being held out to him that if he would clear Argyll, his life might be spared, he consented to recant everything he had said, stating that he had wrested innocent speeches which referred not to Charles but to kings in general, and that he had falsely and maliciously accused Argyll. He also lamented that he had abused the trust placed in him by the Earl of Athole and Montrose, and stated that the latter had warned him "rather to keep within bounds than to exceed." Both his first statement and his subsequent recantation completely cleared Montrose and disappointed his enemies, for it must be remembered that though Stewart's evidence was, as far as Argyll was concerned, satisfactorily disposed of, the Earl of Athole's, which was identical with Stewart's, had not been withdrawn, and if Montrose remained at liberty he was certain to call so important a witness to make his case good. Argyll had, however, firmly resolved that Montrose should not remain at liberty, and he had a just confidence in his own ability either to find



or to manufacture a pretext for getting rid of an opponent who was both dangerous and determined.

John Stewart's abject recantation did not save him. The unfortunate man was condemned as guilty of treason, and was beheaded the 28th July 1641, two months after his first examination. His death produced a strong sensation throughout the country. "It served as a warning that for all practical purposes Argyll was King in Scotland,"\* and it was a sample of what was to follow in a long reign of terror, which did not come to an end before many noble victims had fallen under the relentless hand of King Campbell. In this first instance it was plain to all men that he and no other had struck the blow, in spite of the attempt to cover an act of personal vengeance with the forms of law and justice. Baillie thus notices the event:

"Saturday the 24th Mr John Stewart condemned to die by an old Act of Parliament; he supplicat the Parliament for mitigation of his censure. It is true that none ever died for no transgression of that Act, and Balmerinoch being condemned for an alleged transgression,† was thought to have gotten great wrong, and the preparative may prove very dangerous. Whereupon some of the Justices were very scrupulous to pronounce sentence. Yet Mr John was stryving with the life of Argyll, Hamilton and Rothes, and by consequente at the overthrow of our Treaty of the peace, and welfare of the whole Isle. It was therefore thought necessare to make an example, so much the more, as his friends, for whose pleasure his lies were invented, were giving out that all was but collusion betwixt him and Argyll, who undoubtedly would purchase him a free remission. These tales made Mr John be remitted to the Judges who could not nor would not dispense with his execution."‡

It is difficult to understand why Baillie inserts the names of Hamilton and Rothes in this passage, since they do not occur at all in the record of the proceedings against Stewart, whose accusations were directed only against Argyll. The coupling of Hamilton's name with those of the two chief leaders of the Covenant suggests that Montrose was not alone

\* Gardiner's *History*, vol. ix. p. 411.

† Against the King.

‡ Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, p. 382.

in believing that there was some sort of understanding between them, and three months later all Scotland saw them close allies combined against the King.

If Stewart of Ladywell was executed, as Baillie suggests, because his friends said or believed that his recantation was dictated by Argyll—and the truth of the supposition was attested by the minister who attended the dying man—the treacherous cruelty and injustice of his sentence become only the more apparent. Argyll did not consider himself sufficiently cleared by the recantation of Stewart, and several of his principal clansmen, who had been with him at the Ford of Lyon, were examined by his desire. They all deposed that they remembered no allusion to either King or Parliament from the lips of their chief on that occasion, and if they erred it was in proving too much. Athole, who had also been present, and who had in Montrose's presence confirmed the truth of Stewart's report, was not examined.

To justify himself with respect to the accusation of having circulated treasonable bonds, Argyll produced six, all of them of an earlier date than Montrose's bond that was burnt, and all like the latter professing "duty to the public" as their motive. None of them corresponded to those seen by Montrose and his witnesses, but Argyll's subservient Committee accepted them as evidence of the non-existence of any others, and decreed that "the taking of these bonds was good service to the public."



## CHAPTER XII

### IMPRISONMENT IN THE CASTLE

" . . . These are slanders ; never yet  
Was noble man, but made ignoble talk ;  
He makes no friend, who never made a foe."

TENNYSON, *Idylls*.

It was easy for Argyll to obtain a complete justification from **June 1641** what may fairly be called his own tribunal, but as long as Montrose was free to carry out his boldly expressed resolve publicly to clear himself, and "to put the blame on those who had calumniated him," before the Parliament which was so soon to meet, the Chief of the Campbells could not feel safe. That Parliament had hitherto been as submissive to him as the Irish Parliament had been to Strafford, but if the King could not be prevented from coming to Scotland for the Session, and if Montrose were able to carry out his intention of openly accusing Argyll of treason, with Charles's presence and influence to support the charge, the leader of the Covenanters might well feel that he should be placed in a dangerous position, and that many a witness against him, now silent through fear, might quickly spring up. Argyll's apprehensions were shared by the Scottish Commissioners in London, who had received exaggerated reports of Montrose's intentions, and believed that he would attack not one, but all the leading spirits of the faction. Accordingly, both they and "the leaders of the English Parliament, by all means laboured," says Baillie, "to make the King's voyage difficult."

But Montrose's letter, and possibly the influence of the Duke of Lennox, had been so effectual that all attempts to induce Charles to change his mind were in vain. He would, it was clear, allow no difficulties to stand in the way of his journey to Scotland, and the only hope of safety for Argyll lay in the chance of his being able to get rid in some way or

other of his fearless antagonist before the King could come to Edinburgh. It was a life-and-death struggle. With or without a pretext the thing had to be done, and Argyll was too clever not to be able to find or make a pretext that would answer his purpose.

It was extremely disappointing to him and his fellow-conspirators that nothing in any way unfavourable to Montrose could be wrung from Stewart of Ladywell, but in that unhappy man's recantation he admitted that he had sent a copy of his statements concerning Argyll to the Earl of Traquair, and that the person to whom he had entrusted it was Walter Stewart, the man who had carried Montrose's letter to the King. It was at once ascertained that this messenger was on his way home, and a trusty agent, sent expressly to meet him, came upon the man on Friday, 4th June, between Cockburnspath and Haddington. He was carried off straight to Lord Balmerino's lodging in Edinburgh, where he arrived at nine o'clock at night, and was forced to turn out all his papers for the inspection of his captors. At first he denied that he had any more papers than those which were found in the bags and pockets, but in the panel of his saddle was found a leather bag containing, amongst other letters of no great importance, one from the King to Montrose. This was the short answer—given in full in the last chapter—to the Earl's long letter of advice to the King. There was, as has been seen, nothing in it to afford a handle for complaint to the most captious critic. The letter was therefore not produced or noticed in any of the subsequent proceedings, and it is even possible that it was allowed to reach its proper address, since the original has been discovered in the Montrose charter chest. But though Montrose had on a previous occasion claimed and established his right to communicate freely by letter with his Sovereign, the correspondence was made the ground of injurious reports to the effect that the King and Montrose were engaged in some underhand attempts against the welfare of the country. The reader can see for himself how false and malicious were these imputations, for nothing could be more explicit than the King's declaration that the reason of his journey to Scotland was to bring about a firm and solid peace, and to satisfy his people in their



religion and just liberties—words quoted from Montrose's letter.

So far Walter Stewart's captors had been disappointed in their search, but at last they discovered, concealed about his person, some long untidy strips of paper closely scribbled over in his own hand with enigmatical sentences and hieroglyphics. Walter protested at first, with much apparent astonishment, that he had no knowledge of these papers, but he was soon brought, by promises and threats—in which it may fairly be conjectured that the impending doom of his namesake of Ladywell was clearly put before his mind—to give a confused explanation of these notes, and to pretend that though undeniably written by himself, Montrose and his friends were in some way implicated by them. The man was a "timid, half-witted body,"\* but, like many persons endowed with a minimum of brains, he had plenty of conceit, and thought himself as capable of meddling with affairs of State as earls or Privy Councillors. His self-confident manner had imposed even upon Lord Napier, cautious old Scotsman as he was, inducing him to believe that the man was well known to the Duke of Lennox, and that he might be safely trusted to carry an important letter to the King and bring back the answer.

Such a man as Walter Stewart could be made to say anything that suited the purposes of those who (now) had him in their power, and though in answering the close interrogatory to which he was subjected he more than once contradicted himself, he had soon said enough to satisfy his captors, and was packed off to prison in the castle that same Friday night. To show the kind of evidence deemed by a covenanting tribunal a sufficient ground for an accusation of treason against four men of as high standing and character as any in the kingdom, a portion of Walter Stewart's notes is given verbatim. It is a perfectly fair sample of the whole, and was backed by no other evidence of any sort whatever.

"How necessary it is that R. come down to the Parliament. To desire that the H. be kept up till it be seen who deserves them best. That H. be not bestowed by the advice

\* Report of original replies of Traquair to the libel against him in 1641, found among the manuscripts in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh.

of the Elephant, for fear he crush the L. To assure L. that R. and L. being granted, he will be powerful enough to crush the Elephant. Not to let L. drink water unless he promise not to cast it again. To assure D. and T. that unless they take Genero by the hand, they will be trod upon and made naked. To assure L.D.T. that G. will take him by the hand, and lead him through all difficulties, R. and L. granted."

Walter Stewart explained this ridiculous medley as follows: "How necessary it is that the King come down to the Parliament. To desire that the offices of State be kept up till it be seen who deserves them best. That the offices of State be not bestowed by the advice of the Marquis of Hamilton, for fear he crush the King. To assure the King that Religion and Liberties being granted, he will be powerful enough to crush the Marquis. Not to acquaint the King with anything except he promise to keep secret. To assure the Duke and Traquair that except they take the Earl of Montrose by the hand, they will be kept down both at home and abroad. To assure the King, the Duke and Traquair that my Lord Montrose will stand by him through all difficulties, Religion and Liberties being granted." \*

These were clearly the jottings of an unintelligent busy-body who had pleased himself by jumbling together his own fancies with the ideas of more important persons. Even if they had all been true, they would not have proved the shadow of a crime against Montrose and his friends, but Argyll saw in this slight framework material that could, under his own dexterous management and that of his acute ally, Archibald Johnston, be worked up into the semblance of a dark and dangerous plot against the religion and liberties of the country.

On the 11th of June, just a week after the capture of Walter Stewart, Montrose, Napier, Keir and Blackhall were suddenly arrested, without a word of warning or process of any kind, and imprisoned in the castle apart from each other. Neither they nor the public were informed of what crime they were accused, but reports were industriously circulated, both in England and Scotland, that they had intended nothing less than the overthrow of religion and the ruin of the king-

\* See "Libel against Montrose," *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 332.



dom, together with the destruction of Hamilton, Argyll and other prominent members of what by a stretch of meaning might be called the popular party. Traquair, and even the King himself, it was whispered, were implicated in these dark designs. It is worthy of notice that no parliamentary proceeding, such as had in England been considered necessary in the case of Strafford, was attempted, or even pretended, when Montrose and his friends were, without an hour's warning, thrown into prison. Though all were members of the Committee of Estates, and two of them were peers of the realm, the simple fiat of Argyll was enough to accomplish this monstrous piece of tyranny and injustice.

The news of Walter Stewart's arrest, together with some reports of his depositions and of the misconceptions built upon them, quickly reached the King's ears. He lost no time in writing to Argyll—as a Privy Councillor—to clear himself from the false insinuations as to his motives and intentions, which were being spread abroad concerning him. He stated that his journey to Scotland was intended, not to promote division, but to settle the affairs of the kingdom according to the Articles of the Treaty, to establish peace in the State and religion in the Church. He declared that he had not promised the vacant offices of State to Montrose and his friends, or to any other particular persons, and that he meant to dispose of them for the best advantage of his service and in such a manner as to satisfy his subjects. “As for my letter to Montrose,” he wrote, “I do avow it, both for the matter and for the person to whom it is written, who for anything I yet know is no ways unworthy of such a favour.” This letter directly contradicted the evidence of Walter Stewart, and cleared Montrose of some of the charges against him, but it was entirely ignored as evidence. Argyll never produced it at any of the examinations to which Montrose was subjected, and the letter was first disclosed to the public less than a hundred years ago. It was written the day after the arrest of Montrose and his three friends.

Montrose did not allow the indignation he must have felt at being thus suddenly thrown into prison without trial, or even accusation, to affect his dignity or self-control, and no useless complaints escaped his lips. The friends had not

the consolation of being together, and they were at once subjected to a series of private examinations, the object of which was evidently to entangle them in contradictions of themselves and of each other. After the first of these examinations Montrose resolved to claim his unquestionable right to be tried openly by his peers, and when he was sent for by the Committee, to be again examined before them, he firmly refused to accompany the messenger, saying that as the scandal was national and notorious it was fit that the trial of it should also be public.

A warrant was then sent to the Constable of the Castle, and the Earl of Sutherland was directed to bring Montrose in his coach to the Committee. He refused to obey the mandate, and sent back by Sutherland a temperately expressed letter demanding a public trial. No notice was taken of the request, and the next day a body of four hundred men were sent with orders to bring him by force if necessary. Montrose accompanied them without resistance, but when he arrived he would not answer the questions put to him in any other way than by referring his examiners to the answers he had already given. He said he had told all he knew, and that he would answer again in Parliament before his peers. The Committee pronounced him disobedient and contumacious, and sent him back to the castle, where he was still more closely confined than before, Stephen Boyd, the Captain of the Castle, being dismissed from his post for showing too much respect to his prisoners. The friends were allowed no communication with each other, and no one was suffered to see them without the express permission of Parliament.

Sir George Stirling of Keir followed Montrose's example, and refused to answer a second time the questions pressed upon him, but Lord Napier, without sacrificing his dignity, ingeniously avoided the charge of contumacy. The Committee would have been glad to have had him off their hands, if they could by any means have disconnected him from the accusation against Montrose, for he was so well known in the two kingdoms as a man of blameless life, of excellent sense and temper, and "free from all factious humour," that it was difficult, if not impossible, to make anyone believe he



could be in any way implicated in plots or unpatriotic schemes. Accordingly, all modern historians have quietly ignored his part in the supposed "plot," though it is clearly established that he was involved in all that had been said and done, to exactly the same extent as Montrose, and as he was very much older and more experienced than his brother-in-law, he was, if anything, the more responsible of the two.

Lord Napier was sent for on the 23rd of July by the Committee, and the President, looking at a paper he held in his hand, said he had some questions to ask him. "You need not interrogate me," replied Napier, "for, as I told the Lord Balmerino yesterday in the castle, I have deposed all I know freely and ingenuously, and you can compare your questions with my depositions, and if any of them are answered, well—if not, I cannot help it, for I have deposed all I know." As this did not appear to please them, Napier asked with all gravity, "Would you have me depone that I know not?"

The President, however, insisted on reading his interrogatories, and Napier in reply read his own depositions. This process did not give much new light to the Committee, and presently the "Instructions," said by Walter Stewart to have been given him by Montrose and Napier, together with what purported to be the King's answer to them, were put into his hands. The Instructions were of the most innocent character, and simply represented as desirable things the King's presence in Parliament, the full satisfaction of the country on the subject of Religion and Liberties, an Act of Oblivion, and the Government of Scotland according to the established laws of the Kingdom. "These," said Napier, "are your own desires, and herein the Public receives no prejudice." This was not denied, and Napier was then asked to look at Walter Stewart's notes on a long small piece of paper, and to say whether he had seen them before, to which he answered simply, "No." The notes were then read, and he was asked what was meant by the Elephant, the dromedary, the Serpent in the bosom, and many other ridiculous terms. "I know nothing of what these mean," said Napier, "they are Walter Stewart's own notes." "The Elephant and the Serpent in the bosom mean my Lord Hamilton,"

said one of the Committee, "and convey that he has strange ambitious designs." "We never said anything of the sort," answered Napier. "Did you three take an oath of secrecy before you went to the castle?" demanded the President. "We never took one oath or another," replied Napier.

The President then read from Stewart's paper of one Signor Puritano. "Who is that?" asked Napier. They told him it was Lord Seaforth; upon which Napier laughed heartily and said that Seaforth was slandered. They quite agreed with this opinion and "fell in a great laughter." The old Lord appears to have had the art of putting his examiners into a good temper. When they showed him a paper supposed to come from Traquair, which Napier professed to have no knowledge of, they assured him that they believed him.\* After answering two or three other questions of no importance he was removed, and a long consultation was held concerning him. At last he was recalled, and after some speeches in praise of his life and character the Committee ordered him to be set at liberty, stipulating that he should appear before them again if they required him.

Lord Napier was not the man to accept his release in this fashion. He told them that he knew that the Committee meant this sentence as a favour to him, but that he should consider it a double disgrace, since he had been sent to the castle as a traitor to God and his country, and this was no fair acquittal.

"It is not only favour," they answered, "but out of consideration that you are less guilty than the rest."

"I am as guilty as any of the rest," Napier replied. "They knew nothing which they did not impart to me, and they had my approbation." They cried out that he was much deceived, and entreated him to accept the sentence.

"You may command me," said Napier, with spirit, "to hazard my life and means to do you service, but this is my honour, which I hold dearer than the other two. If I were to obtain my release by favour and without a trial, all the world would think that I had taken a way separate from

\* "Lord Napier's Examination before the Committee of Estates," *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 291.



Montrose and Keir, and that I had deponed something to their prejudice." He was then removed, but several of the Committee followed him, and plied him for two whole hours with arguments to induce him to accept the Committee's pleasure.

From this examination Napier concluded that the great crime they sought to discover was that there had been some dealing with Traquair, whom they called an "incendiary." This was a term in frequent use among the Covenanters, and was applied by them to any person of weight or position whom they desired to bring to condign punishment for acting in opposition to themselves. Both Montrose and Napier gave an unqualified denial to the accusation that they had communicated in any way with Traquair, and he confirmed their statement. But, as Lord Napier justly argues in the notes he kept of these transactions, even if they had made use of Traquair's influence for so innocent a purpose as to bring the King of Scotland to give his people satisfaction and to cure the distempers of the State, this would have been no fault deserving of imprisonment. The truth was that Argyll, having played his *coup de main* by shutting up Montrose and his chief supporters, was now searching in all directions for some more plausible justification for his action than could be found in Walter Stewart's hieroglyphics.

Napier regretted that Montrose and Keir had not, like himself, avoided giving offence to the Committee, but after this occasion he resolved, and kept to his resolution, not to answer any more questions on the subject, since the object of fresh questions could only be to ensnare and entangle him in contradictions. Those notes of his from which the account of his examinations has been taken, bring out clearly the fact that the examining Committee was convinced of his innocence. Yet, since he would not accept of a private acquittal, they continued to proceed against him as a traitor, knowing all the time that the charges they were building up against him were absolutely without foundation.

Both the King and Traquair contradicted the evidence which had been extorted from Walter Stewart, and Traquair, probably by the advice of his royal master, to whom he was

warmly attached, wrote a humble submission to the Scottish Parliament. He desired that he might be brought to trial for anything that concerned him in Walter Stewart's depositions, but the covenanting faction, of which Argyll was the undisputed head, always refused their victims a public trial, and Traquair never obtained one. His submission they rejected, and a charge of treason was drawn up against him, and was read before Parliament in his absence.

There still exists a fragment of Traquair's defence, which contains his reply to the accusation of being involved in treasonable plots with the Earl of Montrose and others. He entirely denies the charge, and appeals to the fact that Montrose, Napier, Keir and Blackhall had all declared upon oath that they had sent no letter nor message of any kind to himself. In one part of this defence he describes in a forcible manner the effrontery of the covenanting Committee in setting the evidence of Walter Stewart's senseless and self-contradictory "characters, tablets and depositions" against the consistent testimony of the King himself, of the Earls of Traquair and Montrose, of Lord Napier, and of Keir and Blackhall.\*

A short time before Parliament met, Argyll, wishing to strengthen, if possible, his very weak case against Montrose, sent Lord Sinclair to try to find amongst his prisoner's private papers something that might give additional ground of accusation against him. Every chest, trunk and other repository in the Earl's three houses of Old Montrose, Kincardine and Mugdock was broken open and searched, but nothing was found except a few letters, "flowered with Arcadian compliments," written to Montrose in his early youth, and a justification of the burnt bond. This paper, which was a mere private memorandum, was produced in Parliament, and was also read in the General Assembly which was sitting in Edinburgh. Baillie pronounced it to be full of "vaine humanities,† magnifying to the skye his own courses, debasing to the hells his opposites." Upon such a subject the covenanting minister's opinion is hardly con-

\* See "Traquair's Defence" in Napier's *Montrose and the Covenanters*, vol. ii.

† Meaning classical tropes.



clusive. The paper was doubtless a spirited and incisive defence, but if it bore any resemblance to Montrose's known writings and speeches, it was free from the intemperate and reviling phrases which abound in the utterances of most of the public men of the period.

The subject of the burnt bond being thus brought up again, the General Assembly was desired to pronounce judgment upon it. Baillie had some months earlier declared it "a damnable Bond," but neither he nor the Assembly in general had, it seems, up to this time known its exact contents. The tenor of the bond was now publicly read, and the Assembly, finding it impossible to condemn it as a treasonable document, contented itself with "passing by what concerned Montrose, or any particular person, and making that bond unlawful and not obligatory on any." The publication of the bond and of its justification produced an effect opposite to that designed by Argyll. The Assembly, finding that Montrose had been so much less guilty than they had supposed, ventured to suggest in modest terms that the unhappy differences between the leading members of Parliament might possibly be removed, and it was proposed that some of their number should act as peacemakers. Henderson, the Moderator, applauded the suggestion, but the message was treated by Parliament—or by the Parliament's dictator—as an impertinence, and was passed over without an answer.

The House had met on the 15th of July to receive a message from the King, postponing his visit till the following month. In connection with this message it may be noted as a significant fact that after Montrose was once safely shut up in prison the Scottish Commissioners in London, who were always ready to do Argyll's bidding, no longer "laboured to make the King's voyage difficult." On the contrary, they now urged on the royal visit as eagerly as, a few weeks before, they had striven to prevent it. They spoke such smooth words to the King that he can hardly be blamed if he began to imagine that by means of the revived loyalty of his northern subjects he might find a way of escape out of his rapidly increasing difficulties with his English Parliament.

The Scottish representatives continued to sit, though with a thin House, and Montrose and his friends were allowed, after many earnest supplications, to appear before Parliament and to affirm their innocence in general terms. At the same time a charge was drawn up against them and read in their absence. Baillie describes it as "verie odious lybel," meaning by this phrase, not to excuse Montrose, but to indicate the serious nature of the charges made against him; the word "libel" being understood not in its usual modern sense, but simply as a legal term for a written or printed Act of Accusation. He and his friends were accused of perjury in the Oath of the Covenant, of divisive motions, of false accusations against the Committee of Estates—of which all four were members—of seeking particular preferment for themselves; of leasing-making, of entering into a treaty of combination and friendship with a notorious enemy of the State (Traquair), and of using "dishonourable speeches" of His Majesty.

Leasing-making, be it remembered, was the crime for which John Stewart had so lately been beheaded, and in his case it had been interpreted to mean spreading calumnies against Argyll, or, more truly, making assertions which Argyll declared to be calumnies, but which were never proved to be false. Upon the points enumerated above, the King's Advocate was ordered to draw up a formal accusation, and in carrying out his instructions he had the able and eager assistance of Archibald Johnston, who, early in the history of the Covenant, had become Montrose's bitter and relentless enemy. Amongst the charges brought against the Earl in particular was one accusing him of having striven to obtain in the Treaty with the King an amnesty which should include all on both sides without exception, and of having shown a treasonable lenity in the case of the House of Airlie, though in the latter instance he had a "standing Act of Committee" exonerating him "in all those particulars."

It will readily be allowed that these two charges discredit not the accused but the accusers. With regard to the amnesty, there can be no doubt that the charge was true at least in spirit, and that Montrose's feeling was strongly



against the vindictive and one-sided demands made by the covenanting party. There are few things more discreditable to the English and Scottish Presbyterians alike than their persistent refusal to agree to any treaty with the King which did not bind him to punish by exile, confiscation, and even death, all those who had distinguished themselves by their faithfulness to his cause. In vain Charles reminded them that a general act of oblivion is the best bond of peace after civil conflict. In vain he pleaded with them to consider the perpetual dishonour that must cleave to him if he abandoned those who out of a sense of duty had sided with their King in the contest. To the very end they pressed their vengeful and dishonourable demands, but on this point they found Charles as inflexible as they were persistent.

To return to Montrose. When he was informed that a formal Act of Accusation was being drawn up against him, he petitioned for Counsel to aid him in his defence, naming Sir Lewis Stewart and two other lawyers of good reputation. This was granted, but a request to be allowed to meet with Napier and Keir for consultation was refused. Three contemporary transcripts of the spirited defence written by Montrose have been preserved in the charter chest of his family. Each charge is taken in its order, and when there is any conceivable ground for it his action in regard to the charge is clearly explained and justified. The general tone of the defence is temperate and dignified, but there are passages in which a half-scornful indignation breaks through the calm and quiet periods, as when, in reference to the offices of State, he points out that he and his friends could not have asked the King to bestow those offices upon themselves, and at the same time have advised him to retain them "to corrupt others too, neither of which," he briefly writes, "is true." More than one charge is dismissed as "a senseless lie," and at the end he gives his reasons "whereby all men may be convinced to think that libel nothing but a rhapsody of forethought villany."

There is also a separate answer to the charges against Montrose, grounded on John Stewart of Ladywell's depositions, and in this document all the accusations brought against

Argyll by that unfortunate man, and by Sir Thomas Stewart of Grandtully, are boldly reiterated, "that all the world may know what probable grounds he (Montrose) had to study and labour for establishing the King's authority and liberties of the country."

Lord Napier's answers to the libel, shorter and more general than those of Montrose, have also been preserved, and are a convincing defence of himself and his friends. He justifies himself and them at considerable length for having communicated privately with the King, arguing that "all private ways are not unlawful, for we are obliged by the law of God to maintain our religion and the liberty of our country, by all means, private or public." He asks: "If a minister, admitted and sworn to teach the Gospel publicly, teaches any man privately the same doctrines, is he perjured?" This illustration closely parallels the action Montrose and he had taken in the advice offered by them to the King in their private capacity—advice which even Argyll himself could not venture to call unwise or unpatriotic.

Napier's indignation was specially roused by the charge against them of striving to gain for themselves the offices of State, and he writes: "If ever we motioned either office or benefit for ourselves in any sort, we are content that all be true they say." After going through some of the accusations founded on Walter Stewart's "scribblings," he says, "but I am exceedingly ashamed to answer that haberdasher of small wares, which if they were proven were nothing worth, and not proven, prove the libeller something else than an honest man." "We never entered treaty with Traquair," he goes on to say, "and were not accessory to Wat Stewart's cabalistic fancies, and therefore this ground failing, all builded on it proves ruinous." He ends his defence, which is full of his quaint, dry humour, by protesting that "when they fail to find actions to charge us with, to fill up the lybel, we are quarrelled with for intentions, which are only known to God."

As the prisoners were never brought to trial, neither this nor any other defence was made public, while all possible ways were taken to injure their reputation, and to stir up



popular feeling against them. One efficient means to this end was the title of "Plotters," which was applied to them in all the proceedings against them and in every public mention of them and their affairs. Never has the word been more unjustly and falsely made use of. In all the intricate processes against them, which, by Mr Mark Napier's untiring research and industry have been at last unravelled and thrown open to public inspection, there is no shadow of evidence of any plot whatever. Let any man read that evidence, and ask himself the questions, "What was the plot? What were Montrose and Napier aiming at in the transactions here under investigation?" The only possible answer is, that they were aiming at bringing the King to Scotland. But this aim they had from the first publicly avowed, and so strongly were they backed up in their purpose by the general feeling of the country, that the agents of the ruling faction among the Covenanters could only venture upon a quasi-private and underhand opposition to the project. Argyll was eager to establish the existence of some sort of conspiracy against himself and his colleagues. Hence the charge of leasing-making, and the attempt to entangle Montrose in admissions which might make him responsible for John Stewart's statements. But Montrose's speech and action had been, as has been seen, so absolutely frank in this matter—he had so clearly announced from the first his intention to deal with the question only in open Parliament—that it was impossible by any ingenuity to twist anything he had said or done in regard to Argyll into the faintest semblance of plotting. Yet the odious term of "Plotter" served its purpose at the time, and though not only the clearest evidence in this particular affair, but the whole tenor of Montrose's life, acquit him of being in any sense a "Plotter," the discredited slander still lives in modern history.

In the month of July, Montrose was more than once brought before Parliament, but he was only asked a few unimportant questions, and was not allowed to defend himself. His cousin, Lord Fleming, left among the Cumbernauld papers of that date some short but interesting notes describing the first occasion on which the unjustly accused Earl stood in

that House as a prisoner. As he entered the lofty hall which was part of the fair new Parliament House, finished only two years earlier, he made "a low curtacie" to the assembled members, who were sitting under the presidency of Lord Burleigh. His position resembled in some respects that of Strafford when four months earlier he had stood at the Bar of the Lords, impeached by the Commons. But King Campbell, though even more unscrupulous than King Pym, was far less daring, and Argyll was not backed up as Pym was by a popular hatred so strong and fierce as that which enabled the Puritan leaders to hound to his death the great English Earl. Whatever parallel there might have been in outward circumstance, no two men could have been more unlike in character and personal appearance than Strafford and Montrose. The English royalist statesman, older by many years than the young Scottish noble, bore, stamped in unmistakable characters on his strong, harsh face, the signs of that fierce, resentful temper which, by stirring up personal enmity against himself, often defeated the wise and patriotic ends he strove so earnestly to attain. The strength which in Strafford was often offensive, was winning in Montrose, because in him it was allied to a temper ardent indeed, but genial, happy, and completely under control.

Most unlike the "proud, glooming look" of the English Earl facing his enemies was the serene self-possession of Montrose as he stood with uncovered head before the mixed Assembly in the Parliament House at Edinburgh. When he was asked what he had to say, he only requested that the supplication to be tried by his peers, which he had already sent in, might be considered by their Lordships. On being twice pressed for a different answer, he at last replied in a short speech, which was taken down at the time by his cousin, Lord Fleming. "I am heartily sorry," he said, "that it should be my misfortune to show myself in this condition; for as it has been far from my intention to fail in my duty to the public, so was it as much from my thoughts that I would have appeared here upon the present terms. . . . For what I have done for the public is known to a great many, and what I have done against it is unknown even to myself. However,



as truth does not seek corners, it needs no favour, neither will I trouble your Lordships with longer discourses, but resolutely rely upon my own innocence, and still in all humility attend upon your Lordships' pleasure."

At this point Montrose was removed, but as it was the object of his enemies in the Parliament to induce him to say something which might be used against him, he was called back, and once more asked by Lord Burleigh if he had anything to represent to the Parliament. Again he answered by a courteously expressed negative, emphasized by the following characteristic words: "My resolution is to carry along with me fidelity and honour to the grave, and I therefore heartily wish that I may be put to all that it is possible to question me upon, and I shall either give your Lordships all full and humble content, or otherwise not only not deprecate, but petition all the most condign censure your Lordships shall think suitable to so much demerit."

This was not the humble and unconditional submission which Argyll desired to extract from his prisoner, and Montrose was sent back to the castle, where he was from time to time questioned by the Committee. They sought to draw him into making some kind of accusation against Argyll, knowing that as a prisoner he was helpless to press the charge, and that any incautious words on that subject might be used against him, as such words had been used against John Stewart of Ladywell. But Montrose, without in any way drawing back from the statements made in his depositions on the subject of his conversation with Mr Murray of Methven, refused to be entangled by dangerous questions, and defeated the attempt of his enemies to ensnare him.

For two long weary months the imprisoned Earl watched the summer days go slowly by, when on the 14th of August he was ordered to appear in person as a delinquent in the place appointed for common incendiaries. He had no choice but to obey the summons, and though Argyll, without doubt, triumphed inwardly at having, by his simple fiat, brought so distinguished a nobleman to stand as a criminal at the Bar of Parliament, Montrose's calm and fearless dignity of look and manner maintained a superiority over

his successful enemy which no mere outward circumstance could reverse.

Montrose pleaded for permission to answer at once the charges brought against him, and asked for the extracts of the papers and depositions upon which his summons was founded, but his request was refused and his trial again postponed. Everything that we know of Montrose assures us that by no outward sign or gesture did he betray to friend or foe the bitter suffering he endured when he turned from the Parliament House to go back to his narrow chamber in the castle. Strong in conscious innocence, he had persuaded himself that when he once obtained the hearing of Parliament he must convince his judges of the groundlessness of the charges against him. It seemed to him clearly impossible that the testimony of a single witness like Walter Stewart should, in an Assembly which was too large to be actuated by motives of personal fear or petty spite, be allowed to weigh against the united and consistent statements of men of such well-known honour and probity as himself and his three companions in captivity.

No one knew all this better than Argyll himself, and being, as he was for the time, the despotic ruler of Scotland, he was fully resolved that Montrose should never obtain any formal trial. With the concurrence of Archibald Johnston it was easy to find plausible reasons for postponing the proceedings from time to time, and to keep Montrose safely out of the way till Scottish affairs should be in such a position as to render any accusations he could make against Argyll of no account. Meanwhile the long array of charges against the so-called Plotters had been read in Parliament, and could not fail to work the desired effect upon the minds of men in both kingdoms, as long as no denial or answer of any kind came from the accused.

Montrose had pleaded hard on this 14th day of August to be allowed to answer these charges, and to clear himself in the eyes of the world, but he had pleaded in vain. The opportunity so long and earnestly wished for had come and gone, and instead of returning to his prison as he had hoped to do, looking forward to a speedy release, he had come back



with crushed hopes, seeing no end to the obstacles and delays which would arise to prevent his being heard in his own defence. The event to which he had long looked forward with ardent intensity, as the only means of restoring peace and lawful government to oppressed Scotland, had at last come to pass. The King was arriving in Edinburgh that same Saturday evening. Montrose knew that it was partly owing to his own representations that Charles was coming to visit his native kingdom, and he knew also that the King had counted upon his support and assistance to restore the royal authority to its rightful place in the Constitution and in the hearts of Scotsmen, and to check that insupportable tyranny of subjects which had worked so much mischief in the country.

Charles would now find himself alone and unsupported, confronted by powerful and unscrupulous enemies—enemies all the more dangerous because they professed to be friends—and Montrose could hardly help knowing that Charles would be helpless in their hands; that the evil faction, against which he had himself fought in vain, would by fraud or by force overpower the too-yielding monarch, and establish itself more firmly than ever on the ruins of the royal power and of the people's liberties.

Argyll would meet the King the next day, and would, with quiet, insolent triumph, congratulate him on being delivered from the dangerous machinations of the detested "Plotters," as he would term the loyal gentlemen imprisoned in the castle. Very differently had Montrose pictured to himself that royal entry into Edinburgh. The cordial greeting to himself, the kindly, trustful glance with which the sad and anxious Sovereign \* would receive him: had he not dwelt upon all this, and more, in anticipation? In imagination he had constituted himself the defender both of the King's rightful power and of the country's liberties—he believed the two things to be bound up together—and he would have given Charles honest counsel, and would have torn away the veil that hid from the King's eyes the ruinous double-dealing of Hamilton, and of other less eminent cour-

\* "The King is now very sad and pensive," 1641. Baillie, p. 353.

tiers who constantly betrayed their royal master's blind trust in them.

Some such thoughts as these must have filled the mind of the imprisoned Earl on the eve of the King's visit, and anyone who has studied Montrose's character with the insight which intelligent sympathy alone can give, will feel convinced that no period of his eventful and troubled life was so full to overflowing with mental suffering as were these months of unjust imprisonment. Shut out from his place among his peers, and from his Sovereign's presence, he saw his own life, and that of his dearest friends, threatened by a vindictive and seemingly all-powerful enemy, and his honour, which he held far dearer than life, at the mercy of an unscrupulous faction, which persistently refused him an opportunity of vindicating his innocence. But most bitter of all it must have been to feel that, at such a crisis, his hands were tied; that he was helpless to stem the flood of disaster which he clearly foresaw, and which threatened to overwhelm in one common destruction the King whom he revered and the country which he loved.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE " INCIDENT "

"When Charles we've bankrupt made, like us,  
Of Crown and power bereft him,  
And all his loyal subjects slain  
And none but rebels left him,  
When we have beggared all the land  
And sent our trunks away,  
We'll make him then a glorious Prince  
The clean contrary way."

Song, 1643, by Sir RICHARD FANSHAW.

THE King arrived at Holyrood House on the evening of 1641 Saturday, 14th August, bringing with him a very small train, and of these few, two at least, the Marquis of Hamilton and William Murray of the Bedchamber, soon proved themselves more serviceable to the Lords of the covenanting faction than to their royal master. Hamilton's first object was always his own safety and interest, and he quickly saw that in existing circumstances these could only be secured by an alliance with Argyll. Charles had one loyal servant in the Duke of Lennox, the nobleman whose influence Montrose had made use of in persuading the King to undertake the journey. Clarendon speaks of Lennox as "a man of honour and fidelity in all places, and in no degree of confidence with his countrymen, because he would not admit himself into their intrigues."

Charles went in state to the Parliament on Tuesday, the 17th, followed by the loyal acclamations of his northern subjects, who were evidently well pleased to see their own native King once more in their midst. Mindful of Montrose's advice he told the House in his opening speech that his object in coming was to perfect whatever he had promised, as well as to quiet those distractions that had fallen out amongst them, and he assured them that there was nothing he could do with more cheerfulness than to give his people content and general satisfaction.

On the 21st of August, a petition from Montrose was read to the Parliament, entreating them to take his case into consideration. Argyll, in the hope of drawing from him an indirect acknowledgment of the justice of the proceedings against him, ordered the Committee to ascertain from the Earl, and report to Parliament, whether he desired to be allowed to make an "accommodation and humble submission" to the King and Parliament, or whether he required a legal trial. A few days later the petition was read again, with Montrose's answer, in which he declared that "he did not desire any accommodation, but only a speedy, just trial, with those papers which he had often petitioned for before." The answer he obtained was, that as for the papers he demanded, he should have as much favour as any in the like case, and that the King and Parliament would take the judicial trial of his process to their consideration in their own time and when they thought it convenient. At the same time he was exhorted to give satisfaction to the House by signing a form of unconditional submission, which was drawn out for him.

Montrose was not to be inveigled into an act which would have involved an admission that he was justly accused, and "after many deliberations," says Baillie, "since he refused to suscryve the submission which the King did see and not disallow, the cognition of his cause was cast by till Parliament had despatched their more weighty affairs." A petition from Montrose, Napier, Keir and Blackhall, praying that they might be released on bail, met with the same fate. The King was probably willing, as Baillie insinuates, that Montrose should subscribe anything, if by so doing he could propitiate his enemies and regain his liberty. Charles was not strong enough to stand up and insist, as he ought to have done, that before he would proceed one step in any other business these men, whose only offence was, as he well knew, loyalty to the Crown and to the Constitution, should have the simple justice they asked for. But he knew himself to be helpless against the endless obstacles that would be opposed to any fair and straightforward trial, and he doubtless had good ground for believing that any direct advocacy of their



cause by himself would do his imprisoned friends more harm than good.

One of the most faithful of his personal attendants—Endymion Porter—who had accompanied his royal master to Edinburgh, saw clearly how little chance the King had against his strong and subtle opponents in Scotland. Writing to his friend, Sir Edward Nicholas, in the early days of September, he says: "The King is yet persuaded to hold out, but within two or three days must yield to all, and here are legislators that know how to handle him, for they have his bosom friend (Hamilton) sure, and play their game as he directs them that sees both." "Though Montrose be in hold," he goes on to say, "he is so gallant a gentleman, and so well-beloved, as they will be fearful to meddle with him, but will keep him up so long as the King is here." \*

Porter's correspondent, Secretary Nicholas, was equally sure that Montrose would come to no great harm, and in a letter written about this time assured the King that "as for the Lord Montrose and the rest, some here (that pretend to understand the condition of their case) are of opinion that their innocency is such that they will not fare the worse for Your Majesty's leaving them to the ordinary course of justice there." The King wrote on the margin of this letter: "This may be true that you say, but I am sure that I miss somewhat in point of honour if they be not all relieved before they go hence." Charles could see that in Argyll's secret tribunals innocence was but a slight protection to a man attacked and impeached by the dominant faction. The deepest grief and the greatest sin of his life was still fresh in his memory, for barely three months had passed since he had failed to save his greatest and most faithful minister, the Earl of Strafford, and had been driven to sign the death-warrant of a man who was far more innocent of treason, according to any fair interpretation of the laws of the realm, than were some of his judicial murderers. The King never forgave himself for yielding to the pressure put upon him by his own cowardly counsellors and by the great Earl's relentless enemies, and his anxiety to save Montrose from Strafford's fate became, in

\* *Life and Letters of Endymion Porter*, p. 192. By Dorothea Townsend.

Argyll's hands, an additional lever with which to extort from him one concession after another.

Nothing could have been more prosperous than the early days of the royal visit, and Charles was at first full of hope that he should be able to attain the ends he had in view. Montrose's anticipations that the King's presence would be sufficient of itself to stir up the dormant loyalty of the people were fully justified. Whatever the secret designs of a few leading men may have been, it was obvious that, as Montrose had written to Charles, the Scottish people had no wish to overthrow the monarchy. Edinburgh overflowed with loyalty, and not only the citizens, but many of those among the higher classes, who had been prominent supporters of the Covenant, were won over by the King's evident desire to give satisfaction to his countrymen. The gentle courtesy of his manner, the sad, appealing face, the kindly disposition which made him ready to think well of those who approached him, and the kingly dignity which surrounded him like an atmosphere, all told strongly in his favour. The very ministers forgot to be suspicious of those Popish proclivities which they had attributed to him, and encouraged the reviving loyalty of their flocks.

But there were many in Edinburgh to whom this state of things was extremely unsatisfactory. The English parliamentary party had lost no time after the King's departure in sending after him a small committee of their own members, headed by Hampden, to spy out all their Sovereign's movements, and to prevent him, if possible, from coming to a cordial agreement with his northern subjects. The discontented faction in Scotland had long been their secret allies, and it may readily be conceived that to them and their designs the sudden change of feeling brought about in the Scottish capital by Charles's attractive presence boded no good. To Argyll, more than to any other man in Scotland, the King's growing popularity was intolerable, and his scheming brain was already contriving plots which might enable him to strike a secret and fatal blow at the rising edifice of Charles's fortune. The King, deceived by Argyll's repeated professions of obedience and affection, believed that he had



won over his dangerous opponent, but he was soon to discover that Argyll meant to be master, and was strong enough to carry out his intention.

The great business of the Session was about the offices of State, the disposal of which the Covenanters were resolved to wrest from the King and to keep in their own hands. Charles maintained that the nomination of his Privy Council was a special part of his prerogative, the long possession of the Kings of Scotland, the unquestionable right of the Kings of England. But he found that his opponents were determined to carry their point, and feeling himself too weak to resist them, he endeavoured to compromise the matter by consenting to nominate to the offices only with the approval of Parliament. The concession was accepted, but the King's difficulties were not at an end.

Loudon was made chancellor, Sir Thomas Hope, advocate, and several others of the faction retained their places. Baillie says that "the most and best part of the Estates," by which he means the extreme Covenanters, "were content to have Argyll treasurer; but the King was peremptory in refusing that motion." He nominated the Earl of Morton, Argyll's father-in-law, but Argyll would not hear of this, and declared that Morton was unfit, because his estates were loaded with debt, and because he was "decrepit and unable." Morton answered Argyll's angry objections with moderation, and reminded his ungrateful son-in-law of the many and great good offices for which he (Argyll) was indebted to him. Argyll could not deny the facts, but persisted in his opposition, and Morton, rather than be a cause of division, begged the King to nominate some other noble. Very unwillingly Charles acceded to his request and named Lord Almond for the vacant post.

"Argyll had been always before to that man a most special friend, but he said he behooved to prefer the public good to private friendship, and so did avowedly oppose that notion."\* Charles, however, was firm upon this point, and could not be persuaded to nominate Argyll. Secretary Nicholas wrote to the King: "The party here who we say hath

\* Baillie, p. 390.

the best intelligence from Scotland, which is Mr Pym and young Sir Harry Vane, report that the Earl of Argyll is chancellor of that kingdom; it seems it was so designed." The selection of Loudon for this office had been too popular with the party at large to allow even Argyll to cavil openly at the appointment, but when that ambitious nobleman found that it was the fixed resolve of the King to refuse him the next desirable post, that of treasurer, he could no longer conceal his angry mortification, and it was not long before Charles was made to feel how helpless he was against the enmity of his powerful subject.

In the meantime Montrose had remained closely shut up in prison, no one being allowed access to him without a warrant from the Parliament. He had as yet baffled the attempt of his enemies to entangle him with dangerous questions, or to make him incriminate himself by asking for an "accommodation" with Parliament instead of a fair trial. But Argyll was a man of many wiles, and he had not yet exhausted his schemes for the ruin of Montrose. While the stormy debates which have been slightly noticed above were going on in Parliament, the King evidently getting the worst of the struggle, Montrose was surprised by a visit from the King's Groom of the Bedchamber, Will Murray, who was a nephew of the minister of Methven and an old acquaintance of the Earl's. Montrose ought to have known that no personal attendant of the King's could, by any possibility, have gained admittance to his prison without the consent of the covenanting leaders, and such consent implied unmistakably that they had ends of their own to serve in permitting the interview. But Will Murray was very plausible; the Earl was by nature unsuspecting, and the sight of a friendly face, the sound of a voice which brought news of the most interesting kind from the outer world, could not fail to be welcome to a man who had spent nearly four months in solitary confinement.

When Montrose was told what had taken place in Parliament, how that very attack upon the King's lawful power and prerogative which he had foreseen had already been successful, how Argyll's schemes had been helped on by Hamil-



ton's treacherous connivances—when the imprisoned Earl learnt all this and much more from one who professed to be a devoted friend and servant of the King, it is not surprising that, feeling more bitterly than ever his own helpless position, he caught only too eagerly at the chance which Will Murray offered of some sort of communication with his betrayed Sovereign. Two letters and several messages passed between the King and Montrose by means of Will Murray, and it appears certain, from the evidence still preserved, that the treacherous messenger kept Argyll well informed on the subject. But nothing transpired that could give the intriguing Earl the advantage he was seeking for, until on the 11th October Montrose sent a letter to the King, containing words to the following effect:

"That he would particularly acquaint His Majesty with a business which not only did concern his honour in a high degree, but the standing and falling of his crown likewise."

It is probable that the business alluded to was connected with those treasonable bonds and speeches of Argyll, which Montrose had avowedly intended to bring under the notice of King and Parliament. His chief witness, Stewart of Ladywell, was dead, but the Earl of Athole and Sir Thomas Stewart of Grandtully were at liberty, and had never retracted the evidence they had given to Montrose. In the proposed revelation Hamilton also appears to have been involved. Will Murray was at that time looked upon as an enemy to the Marquis, and Montrose may possibly enough have proposed through him to the King that some decided measure should be taken to bring home to Hamilton, as well as to Argyll, the treasonable practices of which he believed both to be guilty. Everything that we know of the characters of the King and Montrose negatives the idea that the measures suggested were of a violent kind. It may, however, easily be believed that Montrose would have been willing enough to bring about a sudden impeachment of the two nobles, like that which the Commons of England had used so effectually against Strafford. He at least was convinced that there was sufficient evidence to support and justify an im-

peachment, and the messages that Will Murray carried to and fro between the castle and the royal lodging were probably intended to make this clear to the King. The treacherous messenger was himself to have been one of the witnesses, for Montrose told Clarendon, at a later date, that "after Murray had been a principal encourager of what had been proposed to the King, and had undertaken to prove many notable things himself, he had been the only man to reveal to Hamilton the whole counsel." It is noteworthy that, immediately after the events that are about to be related, Murray became a close friend to Hamilton and openly hostile to Montrose.

The contents of the third letter brought matters to a crisis. Hamilton and Argyll, who were neither of them brave men in any sense of the word, may have feared the bare possibility of an accusation of treason, and undoubtedly the course they took, immediately after the King had received Montrose's letter, effectually prevented the imprisoned Earl from making the threatened disclosures, while it forced Charles to defend himself instead of accusing them. On the evening of this 11th October, Hamilton, Argyll and Lanerick suddenly left Edinburgh, and a rumour at once spread through the town that one of the most wicked and horrible plots that had ever been heard of had just been discovered, that the lives of three noblemen, "chief patriots and pillars of the Kirk of God," had been in the greatest danger, and that the King himself was darkly implicated in the conspiracy against them. Nor was the rumour confined to the limits of Edinburgh. "A dark and perplexed account" of the affair was at once sent by the English parliamentary Committee to their friends in London, and Clarendon has left it on record that on the morning after the arrival of their letter he was walking in Westminster Hall, discussing the strange story with the Earls of Holland and Essex.\*

\* The discredited passage in the older editions of Clarendon's *History*, which states that "Montrose frankly offered to assassinate Hamilton and Argyll," was probably founded on this first rumour, jotted down at a time when the historian did not even know of Montrose's strict imprisonment. He did not himself insert the passage in his *History*, and he had written another and a fuller account of the incident, in which Montrose's name is not even mentioned. That account closes with these words: "Whatever was in this business, I could never discover more than I have here set down, though the King himself told me all that he knew of



Lanerick's part in the affair is not alluded to by Clarendon, and there seems no reason why he should have been involved in it except as Hamilton's brother. He afterwards gave the following extraordinary account of the grounds upon which he believed the lives of his brother, himself and Argyll to have been in danger.

"Upon the 11th of this current (October) General Leslie sent to the Parliament House to desire my brother and the Earl of Argyll, before their return to Court, to come speak with him at his house with as great privacy as could be, which they did; and with him they found one Lieutenant-Colonel Hurrie, to whom, the General said, my brother and Argyll were much obliged; and desired Hurrie to acquaint them with that particular, which he had already discovered to him; which Hurrie did, and told them he was informed that there was a plot that same night to cut the throats of Argyll, my brother and myself. The manner of the doing of it was discovered to him by one Captain Stewart, who should have been an actor in it, and should have been done in the King's withdrawing chamber, where we three should have been called in, as to speak with His Majesty about some Parliament business, and that immediately two Lords should have entered at the door which answers from the garden, with some two hundred or three hundred men; where they should either have killed us, or carried us aboard of a ship of His Majesty's, which then lay in the road."

Whether Lanerick for an instant believed this choice story (culled from an intending participator in the crime), whether Hurrie ever really told it to him, and whether Stewart himself was the first to tell it, or was prompted to the telling of it by someone in authority, does not appear. General Leslie, in speaking of it afterwards, treated it very lightly, and the supposition which fits in best with probabilities is that "Captain Stewart" had been bribed to tell the tale to Hurrie and Leslie, in order to give a pretext to Argyll and Hamilton for posing as patriots in danger, and by this

it, as I verily believe." Unfortunately Clarendon's sons, who revised and published their father's MSS. after his death, suppressed this passage, and inserted instead the sensational and impossible story which for more than a hundred years disfigured the pages of the *History*.

means to turn popular opinion strongly in their own favour and against the King. Certain it is that, to everyone who is acquainted with the historical characters of Charles and Argyll, it will appear far more likely that the latter should have invented a clever scheme to avert political danger from himself and his party, than that a King so mild and merciful as Charles, should have plotted to entice into his presence three of his chief nobles, with the intention of having their throats cut before his face. Even the less violent deed of carrying them on board one of his ships would have been entirely out of character with anything the King ever did or attempted to do during the course of his whole life. Accordingly, modern historians, hostile to King and kingship, have contented themselves with ignoring details, and suggesting that there must have been some foundation for so extraordinary a charge.

The night on which King Charles's withdrawing-room "should have been" the scene of an assassination only fitted for the palace of an Italian prince of the previous century, the greatest excitement prevailed in Edinburgh. The citizens kept a strong guard in different parts of the town, and the leading members of the covenanting party caused a special watch to be set about their houses, as if to give colouring to the report that some mischief was intended against all the "well affected." The Earl of Crawford, Colonel Cochrane, and one or two others who were accused of being implicated, were arrested and closely watched.

Lord Crawford was a royalist and a Roman Catholic, a man of hot temper and hasty speech, and as he was violently hostile to Hamilton and Argyll he was specially open to suspicion. Colonel Cochrane was a very different kind of man, one not at all likely to involve himself in midnight plots real or imaginary. His aversion to dangerous topics, and more especially to such as might bring him under the displeasure of "King Campbell," is well illustrated by an incident which had happened a few months earlier, when he and Montrose were in England with the army. They were riding together one day in company with General Leslie, when Montrose, in his customary frank and fearless way, began to defend his



Cumbernauld Bond, which had lately been burnt. Turning to Cochrane, he said he could prove that some of the prime leaders in the country were guilty of treason in the highest manner, and that they had entered into motions for deposing the King.

The cautious Colonel had no desire to be the recipient of such dangerous confidences, and when Montrose went on to speak of Argyll's private bonds, Cochrane could stand it no longer, and "entreated his Lordship not to enter any further on that purpose but to leave it and speak of some other subjects." Montrose complied with the request, but a few days later, when Cochrane happened to meet him again in his quarters at Newcastle, the Earl offered to prove what he had asserted during the ride. Cochrane at once took alarm, and "craved his Lordship's pardon not to hear anything more about it." All this characteristic Scottish prudence and cautiousness could not save the poor Colonel from becoming entangled in the meshes of Argyll's web, but he had not much difficulty in clearing himself, and soon recovered his liberty.

The morning after the hurried flight of Hamilton and Argyll to Kineill, the King, who was much agitated, made the following speech in Parliament:

"My Lords, I must needs tell you a very strange story; yesternight my Lord Hamilton came to me (I being walking in the garden) with a petition of very small moment, and thereafter in a philosophical and parabolical kind of way, as he sometimes had used, he began a very strange discourse to me, showing me how his enemies had used all the calumnies envy and malice could hatch to misinform and exasperate my wife against him, which very much grieved him, and he would never believe that His Majesty were anyways accessory to such base plots, and withal, craved pardon to withdraw himself this night from Court."

His Majesty, having thus spoken, took out of his pocket a letter, written from the Marquis of Hamilton to him that morning, and commanded the clerk to read it openly in the House. It contained a relation of His Majesty's favours to him, and concluded with his sworn loyalty and best service during his life to His Majesty. The King, with tears in his

eyes, and as it seemed in a very great grief, said he did very much wonder at this letter, for it was very well known that if he had believed the reports of those of nearest respect and greatest trust about him, long before now he had greater reasons than at present to have laid him fast, but he must tell them he had not only slighted all such reports, but contrariwise, took him by the hand and maintained him against them all; "neither did I think," the King continued, "he could have found, if any such thing had been, a surer sanctuary than my bedchamber." \* This last sentence was an allusion by Charles to his having once made the Marquis sleep in his own bedchamber when he was under some suspicion of treasonable practices.

Charles was extremely earnest to have the matter fully examined. He indignantly expressed his horror of "such base treacheries as were spoken of," and urged a present trial in face of Parliament for "the clearing of his innocency." The Duke of Lennox and other loyal noblemen seconded the King's demand. Even Sir Thomas Hope, the strongly covenanting Lord Advocate, pleaded hard for a public trial, for a Committee, as he truly said, would still in some men's minds leave some jealousies and suspicions on His Majesty's honour. The King reproached the House with the many favours he had granted them, and asked them to show anything they had granted him. It was a strange thing, he said, if it was necessary to ask the opinion of two or three noblemen who had gone away before he could have justice. He even threatened to "rise and leave the Parliament in confusion if they would not yield to his demand for a public trial of that plot."

As the coveted offices of State were not yet formally bestowed, this threat, had the King been strong enough to carry it out, might have brought his enemies to terms. But Charles's strength lay in suffering, not in action. He found himself helpless in the hands of the strong, unscrupulous men who hid their designs against himself and his office under a mask of loyalty and friendship, and he had at last to consent to an investigation by a private Committee "at which the

\* Balfour's account.



King should not be present, and all the members should be sworn to secrecy till the trial was ended." The reason of Argyll's refusal to allow a public trial is plain enough. The hollowness of the whole business would have been clearly shown, and possibly the real contrivers of the plot might have been exposed. Such a result would have been, to say the least of it, highly inconvenient to himself and his party.

The small secret tribunal of the Covenant could select its own witnesses, and it was easy to find those who had listened to hastily worded threats against Hamilton and Argyll, uttered by men who, like Crawford, resented the arbitrary rule of the latter, or doubted the loyalty of the former. All who were accused of being in any way implicated in the "Incident"—as this fabrication of Argyll's was called—were examined and cross-examined before the secret Committee, and the evidence obtained was of the most confused and contradictory character. The evidence was read to the King but was never made public. It was sent to England, but was communicated only to the Privy Councillors, who declared that they found nothing in all those examinations that in any sort reflected upon the King's honour.

The only way in which Montrose's name was connected with the Incident was through Will Murray, who in his examination before the secret Committee told of his interview with the imprisoned Earl, and of the letters from Montrose to the King which had passed through his hands. It has been shown that there is reason to believe that Argyll and Hamilton were already acquainted with the contents of these letters.\* The Committee for the Incident, acting upon the knowledge they professed to have acquired through their cross-examination of Will Murray, humbly entreated the King in Parlia-

\* That such treachery was by no means uncommon is proved by letters written to the King by Secretary Nicholas at this period. "I have been warned," says Sir Edward, "by some of my best friends, to be wary what I write to Your Majesty, for that there are many eyes upon me both here and in Scotland, and that letters that come to your royal hands do often miscarry and come to other's views." Again: "Your Majesty's letter to my Lord Keeper was carefully delivered to his own hands yesterday before the sitting of the Parliament, but his Lordship tells me the effect of it was known here some days before he received it." Will Murray had great opportunities from the confidential position he occupied with the King, and he is said to have made large profits by the ingenious way in which he betrayed one party to another.

ment to let them see the last letter which Montrose had written to His Majesty. This was the letter sent the morning of the day upon which, according to the supposed plot, Hamilton, Argyll and Lanerick were to have been murdered in the King's withdrawing-room.

Charles expressed his willingness to show the letter, but he required that four more members from each Estate should be added to the Committee for this special occasion, and that Montrose should be brought to Holyrood, that he might himself clear the business to them. This was the 30th of October, nearly three weeks after that last letter had been written; weeks that must have seemed long indeed to the imprisoned Earl, as day after day went by bringing no return of the messenger, no answer from the King. Vague reports of the commotion in the town may have reached him through the attendant who waited on him, but it can hardly be doubted that special care had been taken to keep him in ignorance of the events that were taking place in Edinburgh.

That something had gone wrong was clear enough. The dead silence that followed Will Murray's last visit was a sure sign that something disastrous to his rising hopes had happened, and it must have been a relief to the sad tedium of his days when he was ordered to go "under a sure guard" to the coach that was waiting to carry him to Holyrood. There at two o'clock in the afternoon he was ushered into a room where some twenty or more members of the Scottish Parliament awaited his coming. Many of the faces were not friendly ones, but amongst them sat the King, and whether or not the sight of his Sovereign was a surprise to him, the moment was an exciting one for Montrose. The scene took place on an October afternoon, in one of those fine old rooms, some of which still remain to show us what Holyrood was like two hundred and fifty years ago. We can see the flush of strong emotion that rises to the loyal Earl's face as he bends low before the King, whose sad eyes, full of kindly sympathy, rest anxiously upon him, till he notes the calm, undaunted look with which Montrose confronts his examiners.

This was their only meeting during Charles's visit to his native country, and an impassable barrier of men, hostile



to both, stood between them to prevent any word of free speech from one to the other. But in highly critical circumstances the effect of mere personal presence may be powerful to draw out those mysterious human sympathies which will often find expression for themselves without the help of words.

In the scene that followed, Montrose so bore himself in the difficult position in which he was placed, that Charles's esteem and respect for the loyal and upright subject who had already suffered so much for him could only be increased. Frank and even impetuous as Montrose was by natural disposition, his remarkable power of self-control enabled him, when occasion required, to be both prudent and reserved.

Spalding relates that Montrose being brought down and "questioned upon his letter, which he thought none knew but the King himself, did so cunningly carry himself in this perplexity that no ground or argument could be gathered from his speeches, do what they would." When he returned that evening to the loneliness of his prison chamber he could at least take with him the satisfaction of having looked upon his Sovereign's face, knowing it to be the face of a friend, and of having defeated the new design against himself of his untiring enemy. Argyll indeed had not shown himself in this encounter, but his hand was clearly seen in it.

On the 2nd of November the Earl was again examined on the same subject, this time before the Committee alone. The only words in the letter considered of sufficient importance to be noticed were those already quoted: "That he would particularly acquaint His Majesty with a business which not only did concern his honour in a high degree, but the standing and falling of his crown likewise." Montrose knew that his venture had failed, whether by accident or by treachery he could not yet be sure, and as he steadily refused to be drawn into making useless charges against any particular person, the Committee again failed to entangle him, or to obtain from Will Murray's revelations any new accusation against him. The failure of his enemies to connect Montrose's name in any way with the bundle of inventions which they called the "Incident," is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the long list of charges entitled

“Montrose’s libel,” and founded upon. Walter Stewart’s evidence, was read in the Parliament House some days later than the date of these examinations, and contained no reference to the supposed plot against Hamilton and Argyll. There is nothing to show that in Scotland Montrose’s name was ever mentioned in connection with the Incident, and this is the more remarkable, because it seems clear that Montrose’s attempt to give the King substantial evidence of Argyll’s and Hamilton’s disloyalty was the impelling cause of the whole affair.

To the populace in both countries the Incident remained an unfathomable mystery. The uncertainty of the vague rumours which circulated among the lower orders, together with the secrecy of the inquiry, suggested, as had been intended, the belief that the country had escaped by a miracle some terrible though unknown danger. When it became certain that the results of the secret investigation would not be made known to the public it was whispered that the matter was hushed up in consideration for the King’s concern in the plot. How opposed this supposition was to the real truth, how cruelly hard upon Charles, is shown by his desperate efforts to obtain a public and open investigation of the whole affair, and by his reluctant consent to a private one when he found it was in vain to hope for any other.

A careful examination of all the documents relating to the Incident which have been discovered \* will, I believe, convince anyone whose judgment is not too strongly biassed, that this was no real plot, but a bugbear got up to excite the people in favour of Hamilton and Argyll, and to force the King to defend his own character instead of inquiring into theirs.

There were those in Scotland who took this view of the case at the time when it all happened. Spalding relates as current gossip that the Marquis of Hamilton, fearing lest his treasonable mismanagement of the King’s affairs at the time when he commanded the royal fleet in the Firth of Forth should be revealed by some of those who knew the truth, told

\* Balfour’s *Annals*, A.D. 1641. *Memorials*, vol. ii. pp. 4-18. Also Napier’s *Montrose and the Covenanters*, chaps. v. and vi.



Argyll that he was so deeply engaged to the Covenant that he feared for his life and estate, and begged his ally to stand by him. Argyll replied that he would live and die with him. "Well then," said he, "I have a mind to close up some of my enemies' mouths, and will make it spread that both your life, my brother's, and my own are plotted for by such and such persons, and in the meantime we will convey ourselves from Court to make the matter more likely; and being spread, it will fall out that both the Kirk and Country will suspect the King to be upon the counsel of this plot." "This policy stopped the mouths of such as intended to complain against the Marquis of Hamilton and his complices."

Spalding evidently supposes the idea of the plot to have been suggested by Hamilton, but if this were the case it probably owed all its success to Argyll's management. The design was so cleverly carried out that it completely accomplished the ends of its contrivers, and the thick veil of mystery with which the proceedings were invested not only prevented the fictitious nature of the scheme from becoming apparent, but added immensely to its interest and importance in the eyes of the onlookers.

In all the mass of contradictory evidence that was taken at the time, nothing was proved to demonstrate that any sort of plot against Hamilton and Argyll had ever existed. Both the Scottish Committee and the Lords of the English Privy Council, after full examination of the document, expressed themselves satisfied that nothing in the evidence in any way touched the King's honour. Yet it was rumoured at the time, among those who had *not* seen the evidence, that Charles was disgracefully involved in it, and certain historians, with utter disregard of the facts, have taken up the rumour, and have gravely debated as to how far the King may have sanctioned a plan for assassinating three of his chief nobles in his own withdrawing-room!

Hamilton and Argyll did not return till the inquiry was ended, but they sent more than one message to the effect that they would, when they again took their seats in Parliament, "clear to the House, to His Majesty, and to the whole world, that they never had of His Majesty the least jealousy

or suspicion." The promise was never fulfilled. They entered Edinburgh in a sort of triumph on the 2nd of November, and Baillie remarks upon their return: "Sure their late danger was the means to increase their favour with the Parliament; whatever ruling they had before, it was then multiplied."

Their project had indeed been successful beyond all possible expectation, and their success enabled them to trample relentlessly upon the unhappy King, who was overwhelmed with distress and anxiety. A letter written from Edinburgh by Sir Patrick Wemyss, just before the Incident occurred, tells with simple pathos how "there was never King so insulted over; it would pity any man's heart to see how he looks; for he is never at quiet among them, and glad he is when he sees any man that he thinks loves him, yet he is seeming merry at meat." In the same letter the writer says: "His Majesty has engaged his royal promise to Montrose not to leave the kingdom till he comes to his trial. For if he leave him, all the world will not save his life." This bit of evidence shows clearly how grave was the danger to Montrose in the opinion of his friends. The episode of Stewart of Ladywell had convinced most Scotsmen that King Campbell had the power, if he felt inclined, to inflict capital punishment upon any enemy of his own whom it was his interest to put out of the way.

In the early days of November, just when the excitement about the Incident was calming down, news arrived in Edinburgh that a great rebellion had broken out in Ireland, that the Papists had risen and were slaughtering, with every circumstance of revolting cruelty, all the Protestants upon whom they could lay hands. Though the number of the victims and the cruelties committed were enormously exaggerated, the news was too true. After the strong hand of Strafford had been removed from the helm of the State in that unhappy country, everything had gone wrong. The Irish Catholics, watching the rising power of the Puritan Parliament, and seeing that neither justice nor mercy was to be expected from the new rulers, rose in a despairing attempt to free themselves from Protestant tyranny, and



though the leaders, for the most part, set themselves against violent acts of cruelty, terrible atrocities were perpetrated, and a considerable number of the English and Scottish settlers were massacred, or perished of cold and hunger.

Nothing could have happened more unfortunately for the royal cause. The Irish rebels had in some way obtained an impression of the King's Privy Seal—the Scottish one which was in Lanerick's custody—and this they attached to their proclamation, which they published in the King's name; a shameless untruth, copied later on by English Parliamentarians and Scottish Covenanters when they took up arms against their Sovereign. The King's enemies, both in England and Scotland, seized the opportunity to spread the report that the Irish rebellion had been encouraged, if not set on foot by the Queen, not without Charles's approbation and connivance. "But," says Baillie—strong Covenanter though he was—"in many declarations His Majesty hath since put all such suspicions out of every equitable minde, however too manie to this day will not take satisfaction." \*

This calamity hastened the King's departure, and the remaining business of the Session was hurried through as quickly as possible. The settlement of the offices of State, which had been interrupted by the Incident, was now resumed. Archibald Johnston had set his heart upon being made Clerk Register, and there was much angry discussion on the subject, for, greatly to the surprise of the party, Argyll, instead of backing up his ally Johnston, supported the claim of Sir Alexander Gibson of Durie.

"Since the Treasury could not be gotten for Argyll," says Baillie, "it was agreed to keep the office vacant till the King should change his mind, and in the meantime it was served by a Committee of five, including the disappointed aspirant, who had thus to content himself with possessing the power without the title. By the end of Charles's unfortunate visit to Scotland he was so completely in the hands of his enemies that it seemed as if he had only gone there to reward those who would most daringly insult him. Argyll was made a Marquis, General Leslie created Earl of Leven,

\* Baillie, vol. i. p. 389. Date, end of 1641 or beginning of 1642.

Johnston of Warristoun knighted, and other prominent members of the faction ennobled and rewarded.

"On the other side, the King's faithful subjects and servants must endure all pursuit, vexation and trouble, as if they were rebellious traitors. His Majesty is forced to suffer his true servants to be borne down by his great enemies, and could not get them helped. Some are imprisoned, some are plundered in their houses, estates and means; other some, their stately towers, castles and orchards demolished and thrown to the ground, ruined and made desolate; so that where his good subjects looked for help and redress at His Majesty's hands, by the clean contrary, they are altogether disappointed, borne down and disgraced; and the Covenanters are highly preferred and exalted to their minds, and whatsoever they craved, the King is forced to yield unto them, and leaves his true subjects wretched in means and moyan, distressed, and under great misery, tyranny, bloodshed and oppression."

Such is the melancholy picture that honest Spalding draws of the state of Scottish loyalists at this time. Such was the result of Argyll's victory over the King, upon which a distinguished historian of the present day remarks that, "What Pym was aiming at in England was thoroughly realised in Scotland." Truly Charles was no longer King in Scotland except in name. Partly from the force of adverse circumstances, partly through his own weakness, he had suffered his lawful and constitutional power to be wrested from his hands. Montrose had foreseen the danger, when, in the advice he had given to the King just before all these troubles, he had written these true wise words: "Let not your authority receive any diminution of that which the law of God and nature, and the fundamental laws of the country allow;" . . . "weak and miserable is that people whose Prince hath not power sufficient to punish oppression, and to maintain truth and justice."

Charles did not leave the country without fulfilling the promise which, according to Sir Patrick Wemyss, he had made to Montrose. It may indeed be surmised that many of the later concessions were wrung from him by Argyll and



his party through the fears he entertained for the safety of his faithful subject. On the 16th of November, after an imprisonment of more than five months, "the humble petition of Montrose, Napier, Keir and Blackhall being read in Parliament, they were ordered to be liberated on caution, on promising to carry themselves soberly and discreetly, and to appear before the Committee for their trial on the 4th of January 1642." The proceedings of the Committee were to be limited to the 1st of March, and the sentence remitted to the King, who, in consideration of this nominal concession, promised not to employ any of them in offices or places of Court or State without consent of Parliament, or to allow them access to his person.

Thus at last these four innocent men regained their liberty, when they could no longer be of use to the King or interfere with the designs of his enemies. The Earl of Crawford and the rest of those who had been imprisoned for their supposed part in the sham plot against Hamilton and Argyll were released without even being required to find bail, fresh evidence, if any were needed, of the utter baselessness of the "Incident."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A WINTER OF WAITING

“For there be some who hate him in their hearts,  
Call him base-born, and since his ways are sweet  
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man.  
And there be those who dream he dropt from heaven.”  
TENNYSON'S *Idylls*.

**1641-42** MONTROSE had escaped from the toils of the covenanting faction with his life, but his enemies had succeeded not only in defeating his plans and in disappointing his dearest hopes, but in injuring his good name. “*Nam semper aliquid adhærebit*,” the unhappy King had said, when he was pleading in vain for a public investigation of the Incident, and Montrose, when he regained his liberty, found himself looked upon as a dangerous person and a plotter.

Argyll had in fact performed a clever piece of jugglery in public esteem. He had changed characters with Montrose, by making it seem to his fellow-countrymen that the true-hearted Earl was the selfish, designing traitor, whereas he—Argyll—was the upright and single-minded patriot, seeking only his country's good and his King's honour. He wore the mask well, but succeeding events proved that while the successful leader of the Covenanters, false to his most solemn professions, made his own interests and advancement the chief aims of his ambitious career, the maligned Montrose was ready to sacrifice life and fortune in order that he might follow his own high ideal of righteousness, truth and loyalty.

Before his departure from Scotland the King had stipulated that the proceedings of the secret Committee against Montrose and his friends should be brought to a close at the latest by the 1st of March 1642. Montrose, after his release, was as eager as ever to clear himself in the eyes of his countrymen, but all his efforts to obtain a trial were in vain. Not until the end of January were the voluminous charges against the so-called “plotters” placed in the hands of the accused.



and their defences were required by the 4th of February. Montrose, who had been absent in Angus, "very unwell in his health," and detained by unusually stormy and tempestuous weather, hurried back to Edinburgh, and found himself allowed only one clear day to prepare his answers. When the day came the Committee was not ready. One excuse after another was found to delay the proceedings till, on the last day of February, the four victims of covenanting injustice presented their final protestation against the unfairness which had persistently denied them a trial of any kind. In it they claimed that "no wrinkle or least shadow of blemish should remain upon their name and reputation," on the ground that it was by no delay or fault of their own that "the process against them had not taken a full end." As a matter of fact, it had not been worth while to pursue the baseless charges against them when once Argyll had accomplished his purpose of keeping Montrose out of the way during the King's visit to Scotland.

Montrose and Napier were, however, too keenly sensitive about their honour to allow the matter to drop, and they succeeded in obtaining letters of exoneration under the Great Seal. In these letters the absolute innocence of the accused was strongly asserted. It was stated that after a careful survey of the lives of Montrose and Napier, both before and during the time of the late distractions, nothing in the whole course of their actions could be found which could "rub the least aspersion upon them," much less any presumption of the many heinous crimes which had been falsely laid to their charge. Among other things, it was noted that the accusations were founded on the single testimony of Colonel Walter Stewart, and that this weak testimony was weighed down by the consistent witness to the contrary of Montrose, Napier and their two friends. With this exoneration and the approval of their own consciences they had to be content, but the active public life Montrose had led for the past four years was no longer possible for him, and he retired to one of his own houses, probably Kincardine Castle, the favourite home of his boyhood.

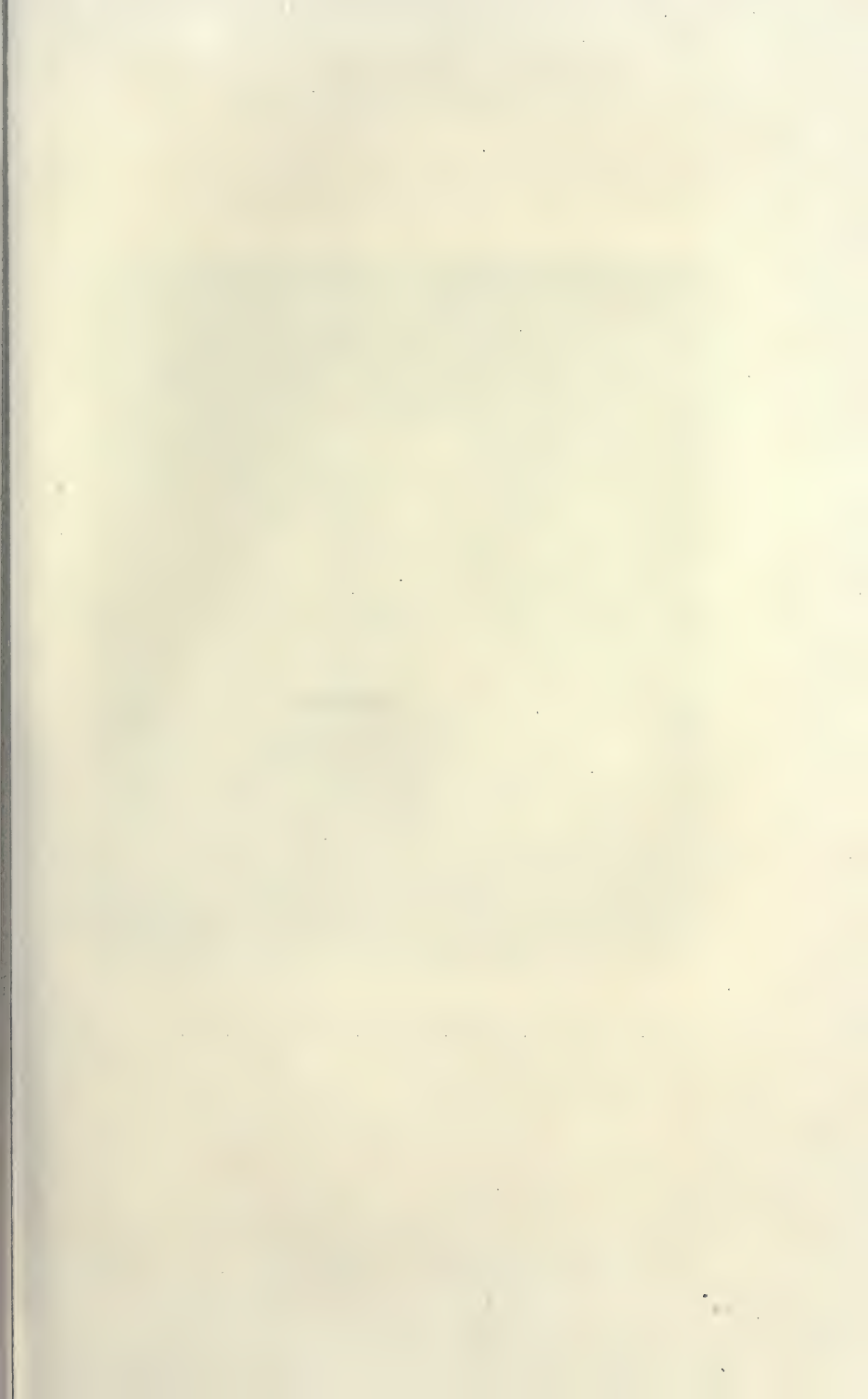
He was at this time twenty-nine years old, and the lull

that preceded the outbreak of the Civil War brought him a short period of comparative tranquillity, giving him one last gleam of home joys and the companionship of wife and children. Of his four boys, the eldest, Lord Grahame, was about twelve years old, the youngest being an infant.

During the rare intervals of leisure that his short and stormy life afforded him, Montrose's love of letters was an ever-ready solace and employment for his active mind. The carefully reasoned essay on Government, already referred to, proves that he could express himself with clearness and vigour in prose, but he turned more naturally to poetical composition, and though he had neither opportunity nor inclination to train his wild muse to any high or sustained flight, yet some of his verses which have come down to us have such a genuine poetic ring that even in this present critical century a few scattered lines of his are still known and quoted. Only five or six of his metrical compositions have survived, all of them very short, except the set of verses usually called "Montrose's Love-song." These verses are loose in texture, and certainly no love-song in the ordinary sense of the term. The lady-love they vaguely portray seems rather an idealized Scotland in the midst of covenanting troubles than an actual woman. Yet the thoughts expressed are free from the fanciful allegorical form which characterizes many of the poems of George Herbert and other writers of the period.

Montrose's poems are so simple in phrase, so fresh and natural in feeling, that we at once recognise in them a spontaneity which lifts them above the plane of mere verse-making. Most men who are capable of being touched by strong feeling do at some period in their lives set themselves to make "poetry" about love or friendship, or some other subject that particularly interests them, and they produce verses which, whatever their literary excellence may be, are more or less imitations, and do not closely correspond to the individual character of the writer. But Montrose's verses truly express his own inner self. They have in them an element of nobleness, and are in harmony with all that we know of him in life and in action.







[To face page 151.

SECOND LORD NAPIER (NEPHEW OF MONTROSE)



The following lines may well have been written during his five months of captivity, or soon after his release, so pathetically do they express his sorrowful experience and disappointed hopes.

“Then break afflicted heart, and live not in these days,  
When all prove merchants of their faith, none trusts what other says,  
For when the sun doth shine, then shadows do appear,  
But when the sun doth hide his face, they with the sun reiteir,  
Some friends as shadows are, and fortune as the sun,  
They never proffer any help, till fortune hath begun ;  
But if in any case, fortune shall first decay,  
Then they, as shadows of the sun, with fortune run away.”

Montrose, however, was not without true friends who loved him the more and clung to him the closer when fortune seemed to frown on him. The constant social intercourse between Montrose, Lord Napier and Sir George Stirling of Keir, which had been so rudely interrupted, was now resumed, and the gloom that still hung over the family circle was enlivened about Christmas by the marriage of Lord Napier's son Archibald, a youth of sixteen, to the Lady Elizabeth Erskine, a daughter of the Earl of Mar. The marriage turned out a very happy one, and the young couple, who were devotedly attached to Montrose, clung to him with unwavering fidelity during the few adventurous years that still remained to him.

The King, though himself in trouble, was not unmindful of Montrose's sufferings in the cause of loyalty, as the following letter, written towards the end of January 1642, will show:

“MONTROSE,—As I think it fit, in respect of your sufferings for me, by these lines to acknowledge it to you, so I think it unfit to mention by writ any particulars, but to refer you to the faithful relation of this honest bearer, Mungo Murray, being confident that the same generosity which has made you hazard so much as you have done for my service will at this time induce you to testify your affection for me as there shall be occasion, assuring you that for what you have already done I shall always remain your most assured friend,

“CHARLES R.”

When Charles had taken leave of the Scottish Parliament, the newly appointed Chancellor, Lord Loudon, had congratulated him on departing “a contented King from a con-

tented people." He must have known that his words were a cruel mockery to the unfortunate monarch who had been forced to yield to his rebellious Parliament almost every vestige of kingly power. And the people, or rather the small but strong faction of nobles and clergy who claimed to represent the people, were as far from being contented as was the King himself.

Argyll was for the time supreme dictator in Scotland—King in everything but name—but the wary Marquis knew well that should Charles ever regain power in England his own unconstitutional position would soon become untenable. He therefore kept up the most friendly relations with the English Parliament, which, encouraged by the success of the Scottish crusade against the prerogative, had received the King on his return to London with new attacks on his legal rights, and with a long list of reproaches embodied in a Grand Remonstrance. This paper, which was a highly exaggerated caricature of every act of Charles's Government from the beginning of his reign, was the handiwork of Pym, and was the first instance in English history of a deliberate and inflammatory appeal to the populace, intended to excite their minds against the existing order of things.

The King saw clearly enough that Pym intended to do in England what Argyll had succeeded in doing in Scotland, namely, to make him a merely nominal King, the slave of the Parliament instead of its head. Charles would have been wholly unworthy of the loyalty which still lived in the hearts of a large proportion of his subjects if he could have tamely yielded to the unconstitutional demands of the leading faction in the English Parliament. Unhappily, in resisting these demands, he listened to rash, perhaps to treacherous counsels, and by his unsuccessful attempt to arrest the five leading members of the disloyal party he so widened the breach between himself and the Parliament that reconciliation became impossible, and within a few days he was obliged to leave London.

During the King's absence in Scotland the House of Commons had taken steps which showed that the possibility of armed resistance was not absent from their minds. In



January, after his departure from the capital, civil war was evidently unavoidable, and Montrose, who could hear of each new event within three or four days of its occurrence, foresaw that if matters came to extremities in England, Argyll would do his best to throw Scotland into the balance against the King. But the Earl was powerless to act. Everyone who was suspected of any leaning towards the royal cause was kept under such strict surveillance that united action on the part of the Scottish Royalists was impossible.

When Field-Marshal Leslie received his new title from the King he swore that whenever His Majesty should require his services he would never even ask what the cause was; but in the spring of 1642, that "little crooked soldier," who was now Earl of Leven, was busy organizing an army larger and more efficient than any that had hitherto been raised in Scotland—an army not intended for the King's service. It was given out that this formidable force was meant for the suppression of the rebellion in Ireland, but Montrose was too well acquainted with Argyll's tactics to doubt that these military preparations would in all probability be turned against the King.

The refusal of Sir John Hotham to admit the King inside the gates of Hull was the first open act of rebellion in England. The Parliament justified and supported that act, and assumed so menacing an attitude, that Charles appealed to his subjects in several declarations, setting forth the concessions he had already made, and the points upon which he was still at issue with the leaders at Westminster. He addressed more than one of these documents to his Scottish Council, and also sent them copies of the messages which had passed between himself and the parliamentary leaders.

The Scottish Government (for such it had become) answered these appeals by sending Lord Loudon to mediate between the King and the Parliament, just as if Scotland had been an independent power. But Charles would admit of no such interference, and roundly stated that he did not require his own Privy Council "to sit as judges upon the affairs of another kingdom." \* He did not permit Loudon to go on to

\* The King's letter to the Council, 25th May 1642.

London, and he ordered a great meeting of the Privy Council to be convened at Edinburgh on the 25th May, that a full statement of the rebellious conduct of the English Parliament might be laid before them, and that the Scottish nobles and people might be reminded of the oath they had taken in the Covenant to maintain the King's lawful authority. This aspect of the Covenant as a National Bond, ostensibly intended to defend at once the constitutional liberties of the subject and the rightful power and prerogative of the sovereign, was from first to last Montrose's consistent view of the document, a view undoubtedly shared by many of his countrymen who had signed with honest and loyal intention. Unfortunately, in a revolutionary movement, honest and loyal men are seldom, if ever, the guiding spirits.

The news of the proposed great meeting of the Privy Council stirred both parties to immediate action. Archibald Johnston, who had been for some months the leading Commissioner of the Scots in London, started off for Edinburgh, to act as special pleader for the Parliament. Montrose went to England early in May, accompanied by Lord Ogilvie and Sir George Stirling, wishing, it would seem, to inform the King of the position and number of his loyal adherents in Scotland, and to ascertain how His Majesty wished them to act in the present crisis of affairs. Charles, who was at York, must have greatly desired to see the men who had, as he himself had said, already done and suffered so much for him, but, feeling himself bound by his word given to the Scottish Parliament six months before, he did not permit Montrose and his companions to approach him nearer than about twenty miles. He wrote, however, a short letter to the Earl, in which he said: "I know I need no arguments to induce you to my service. Duty and loyalty are sufficient to a man of so much honour as I know you to be."

The bearer of the note acquainted Montrose with the King's wishes, and there can be no doubt that the Earl acted in accordance with Charles's directions when, on his return home, he drew up a petition—a copy of which in Lord Napier's handwriting still exists—praying that vigorous measures might be taken to re-establish the King's lawful



power and authority, and reminding the Council of the national oath of allegiance by which they had bound themselves in the Covenant.

The Banders, as the loyal party were now styled—the more odious term “Plotters” having been dropped—assembled in considerable numbers to present the petition, but Argyll, perhaps calling to mind the success of the Incident, at once caused a rumour to be spread that some violence was intended against himself. Watches were set in the town, and no company of the Banders was allowed to enter Edinburgh. Lord Montgomery, who had until lately been a strong Covenanter, presented the petition, which was worded in the most respectful terms, but no notice was taken of it at the time, though at the General Assembly, which met in July, it became the subject of a sharp discussion between the King’s Commissioner and Argyll, with the result that the petition was strongly censured, and an Act passed “to prevent such presumption in time to come.”

Charles had ordered Argyll to attend the Assembly as a member of the Privy Council, and to assist the Royal Commissioner, Lord Dunfermline, but as if to give emphasis to his refusal to obey the command, Argyll read out the King’s letter to the Assembly, and then declared that he only sat there in his quality of a ruling elder from Inverary.\* He followed up his declaration by consistently opposing the Commissioners.

This General Assembly marked the appearance of a new actor on the scene in Lord Maitland, afterwards Earl and Duke of Lauderdale. He was chosen by Argyll to communicate to the King and to the English Parliament the Acts and Resolutions of the Assembly, but the point of his errand was the demand for uniformity of worship, or, in other words, the establishment by the State of the strict Presbyterianism of Scotland throughout the King’s dominions.

Lauderdale, who was one of the bitterest enemies of Montrose, is described by Clarendon as a “young man not accustomed to an orderly and decent way of speaking, and having no gracious pronunciation.” With great abilities, but

\* Baillie, vol. ii. p. 46.

violent and full of passion, he could dissimulate so well that at the time we are speaking of he passed for a strictly religious man of the extreme covenanting type then in fashion, while in the evil days of Charles the Second, when the triumphant faction had sunk to a weak and oppressed sect, Lauderdale became one of its worst persecutors, and distinguished himself by a bad pre-eminence in all the vices of that profligate period.

Hamilton, now more distrusted than ever by the loyal party, was at this time in Scotland, living on terms of closest intimacy with Argyll. It has since been discovered that a marriage was then in contemplation between Hamilton's eldest daughter and Argyll's eldest son, a private contract to that effect having been drawn up in the autumn of 1642. The King, who knew nothing of this, still clung to the hope that his trusted favourite would be true in his extreme need, and after he had sent the Marquis to Scotland, there to use his great influence in preventing the Covenanters from aiding the English rebels, Charles had written these words to him: "Hamilton, this is a time to show what you are."

The double-dealing Marquis did at last show what he was, and in such a manner that even the King's long-enduring trust in him gave way for ever; but for the present he was still considered as the manager of the King's interests in Scotland, and his close alliance with Argyll did more than anything else "to keep the malcontents" (*i.e.* loyalists) "from stirring." \*

\* Baillie, vol. ii. p. 58.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT

"Then Mammon, turning to that warrior, said,  
'Lo! here the worlde's blis! lo, here the end  
At which all men do aim rich to be made,  
Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid.'

'Certes,' said he, 'I n'll thine off red grace  
Ne to be made so happy do intend;  
Another blis before mine eyes I place,  
Another happiness, another end.'"

*Faery Queen.*

THE Civil War broke out in England during the autumn of 1642-43. 1642, and the early successes of the royal army raised the hopes of the King's loyal subjects in both kingdoms. In Scotland there was no open rejoicing, for all free expression of opinion was crushed under the iron rule of Argyll and his clerical subordinates. Still, even they professed as yet to be true to the King, and the simple-minded loyalists of the north were not unnaturally scandalized when they found that no praise or thanksgiving was offered to God in Scottish churches for these unexpected victories. "When General Leslie was in the fields," writes Spalding, "we were deaved with fasting, prayer and praising, but now, no word for the King's victories, for his safety and preservation; marvellous to behold!"

Scotland seemed quiet enough to satisfy even her covenanting rulers, and no hand was raised for the King; but Argyll, always quick to detect the first indications of danger, knew that the lull was only temporary. The one man he feared was Montrose, and he attempted to win over his late prisoner to the stronger and more successful side in Scotland by offering to make him Lieutenant-General of the army still nomi-

nally belonging to the King. Montrose refused to entertain the proposal for a moment, and soon afterwards suddenly went to England, accompanied by his devoted friend the young Lord Ogilvie. This move alarmed the Covenanters. They were ignorant of its object, but they believed that he would probably seek the King, and that his purpose, whatever it was, boded no good to their schemes. Montrose, however, did not go to the King. When he came to Newcastle he heard that the Queen had just arrived in Yorkshire, on her return from Holland, where she had been collecting arms, ammunition and money for the royal cause.

Hardly had she landed in Bridlington Bay, after a stormy and perilous passage, when Admiral Batten, who commanded some of the Parliamentary ships, being informed of her arrival, hoisted sail and came within cannon shot of the town, where she was resting after the fatigues of the voyage. The Admiral is said to have privately sent a pinnace on shore to find out in what house the Queen was staying. The rest of the story must be told from the picturesque annals of Spalding, in the form in which it probably reached Montrose's ears.

"Her Majesty, having mind of no evil, but glad of rest, now wearied by the sea, is cruelly assaulted; for this six rebel ships, ilk ane by course, sets the broadside to her lodging; batters the house, dings down the roof ere she wist of herself; but she gets up out of her bed in her night waly-coat, barefooted and bare-legged, with her maids of honour; whereof one for plain fear went stark mad; being a nobleman of England's daughter. She gets safely out of the house, albeit the stones were falling about her head, yet courageously she goes out, they shooting still, and by providence of the Almighty she escapes with all her company (except the maid-of-honour) and goes to a den which the cannon could not reach, and on the bare fields she rested, instead of stately lodgings clad with curious tapestry."

Montrose, arriving just after this exciting episode, went straight to Her Majesty, but she was so much overcome with fatigue and agitation that she said she would wait to consult with him on the important matters he wished to lay before her until she reached York. He accordingly followed her



thither, and when she sent for him he gave her his reasons for believing that the Covenanters in Scotland, with Argyll at their head, were only waiting for a favourable opportunity to unite their arms with those of the King's enemies in England. The Queen, who was unprepared for such bad tidings, since the Covenanters were still loud in the professions of loyalty, asked Montrose what he would advise. After informing her of the overtures which had been made to himself, the Earl earnestly pressed that a warrant under the King's hand should authorize his loyal subjects in Scotland to organize a force for his defence, and he urged that any delay in putting such a measure into execution would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the Scottish Royalists to serve the King effectually. For if the Covenanters once declared war against him, with the large army they had at their command, they would easily suppress any after risings of the loyal lords and gentlemen.

If this course had been adopted the course of affairs would unquestionably have been very different. Montrose spoke with such evident conviction that it was impossible not to believe in him, and at first the Queen seemed much impressed, but Hamilton was there to oppose him. No sooner had the Marquis heard that Montrose was on his way to England than he quickly followed him, determined to thwart the plans of one whom he had from the first looked upon as a possible rival.

Hamilton professed to have come only to pay his respects to the Queen, but he took every opportunity to condemn the advice of Montrose as rash and imprudent. He allowed that there was some danger to be feared from Scotland, but the young Earl had, he said, exaggerated the peril. He did not think anything need be apprehended from the army now in Ireland, and undertook to avert all danger if the King would give him authority as his Commissioner for that purpose. Hamilton's plausibility prevailed. He was promised a dukedom for his endeavours, and Montrose was dismissed with thanks for his good intentions. Hamilton returned to Scotland, and appeared for a short time so active in the King's service that many of the Covenanters believed he had joined

"the faction," as they then termed the loyal party in Scotland.

Montrose's proposals on this occasion have been censured as rash and impetuous, and one of the courtiers wrote to Ormond at the time that "Montrose was a generous spirit, but that he had not so good a headpiece as Hamilton." If the latter assertion meant that he did not use his wits to ingratiate himself at Court, the statement cannot be contradicted, but the writer doubtless intended more than this. Montrose was young and as yet unknown in England, and the Queen's courtiers had not had any opportunity of testing the merits of his headpiece. It was not long before he proved to all the world that his head was equal to his heart. He had been accused of advising the King at this time to carry the Civil War at once into Scotland. On the contrary, he wished to take steps to prevent such a misfortune. Civil war had already broken out in England, and as long as the Scots professed to hold to their allegiance they could not well deny the King's right to summon to his aid his subjects in the northern kingdom. The mere existence of a strong loyal army in Scotland would have made it both difficult and dangerous to send the Earl of Leven and his troops across the Border to fight against Charles. The measures proposed by Montrose are exactly paralleled by those of any settled Government when it sends a strong body of police or a military force to prevent a threatened insurrection in a disturbed district, and it will be generally allowed that in such cases prevention is better than cure. It is true that if the intending insurgents are sufficiently strong and determined, prevention may be impossible, but the probability of such a contingency only makes it the more urgent that the recognised Government should be first in the field.

Deeply disappointed, and full of sad forebodings, Montrose returned home, but no personal pique or mortification mingled with his troubled thoughts. Instead of folding his hands in despair because his advice had been rejected, he began at once, with the help of Napier, Erskine and two or three others, to frame propositions similar to those he had submitted without success to the Queen, and in spite of Argyll's



watchfulness he contrived to send these proposals to the King; but the influence of Henrietta was powerful with her husband. They were again rejected, and the loyal lords compelled to acquiesce in Hamilton's policy of inaction.

The futility of the favourite's assurances soon became apparent. Charles had granted triennial Parliaments to Scotland, and the next meeting was to be in June 1644; but the Covenanters now pressed the King to call a Parliament a year before the time appointed, giving as their reason for this demand the urgent necessity of at once establishing uniformity of religion throughout his dominions. On this point Charles was not to be shaken. He had resolved rather to die than to sanction the destruction of the Church of England, which he had in his Coronation Oath sworn to maintain, and which he believed from the bottom of his heart to be the one pure and true representative of Christ's Church. He told the Scottish Commissioners that he could not, and would not consent to their intermeddling with English affairs, and that he would not authorise the meeting of the Parliament at Edinburgh before the appointed time.

Upon this refusal, Argyll and his party called a Convention of Estates by their own authority. Hamilton made a show of opposing the motion, as it was distinctly made in open contradiction of the royal commands, but he used his influence to induce the loyal lords to be present at this unlawful Convention, and even invited them to attend in the King's name, promising that if their party did not secure a majority of votes he would protest against the proceedings and would leave the Convention. He especially exerted himself to persuade Montrose to be present at this meeting, and the Earl in reply declared himself ready to grapple with any difficulty at the desire of His Majesty's Commissioner, but he would promise to attend the Convention only on one condition. The Marquis must give his honour that if the loyal party should fail to secure fair and reasonable terms he should endeavour to obtain them by force of arms.

The Marquis replied that he was resolved in such a case to protest, but that he would not fight. Montrose knew the uselessness of protestations which were never meant to be

supported by decided action, and as he was convinced that Argyll would turn the Convention into a weapon against the King, he felt that if he attended he should only place himself in a false position. He therefore remained at home in company with Lord Napier, who also refused to sanction by his presence a meeting which he looked upon as unlawful and rebellious. The event fully justified the wisdom of this decision, for the covenanting faction obtained a large majority and carried every measure that they proposed.

The real question to be decided at the Convention was whether the King's authority should or should not be maintained, and this was a question which, in the opinion of Montrose and Napier, did not admit of debate. They believed that the only hope of settled peace lay in the re-establishment of the royal power, which was the chief bond between the two countries so recently united. They believed also that if the English Parliament—or that fraction of a Parliament which retained the name—found Scotland true to the King, and ready to assist the loyal party in England, the parliamentary leaders would listen to reason, and yield to the King those rights which justly and constitutionally belonged to the kingly office. They were equally persuaded that the King himself, having by experience found the danger of a "power too highly strained, would not demand nor desire more than might safely be granted." \*

A few days after the Convention assembled at Edinburgh, the Earl of Antrim, a loyalist Roman Catholic nobleman of no great reputation, but of some importance from his wealth and influence, was captured in Ireland by some soldiers of the Scottish army. They carried him to Monro, their commander, and in his pockets were found letters from Lord Aboyne (Huntly's second son) and Lord Nithsdale, referring to the vague hopes and plans which had lately been talked of among the downtrodden Royalists in Scotland. Monro forwarded these letters to Argyll, who at once sent copies to the London Parliament.

In one of these letters the writer expresses his confidence that "Montrose would not flinch from what he had offered to

\* *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 59. Original MS. in Lord Napier's handwriting.



do in his interview with the Queen at York." Another letter, dated 8th May 1643, was written in a more doubtful tone. It was known that the Covenanters were doing their best to induce the Earl to accept a high command in their army, and some of the Royalists took it for granted that after the mortifying manner in which his counsels had been rejected by the Queen he would be easily won by the enemy. "Montrose," wrote Sir Robert Poyntz to the Marquis of Ormonde, "was the only man to be the head and leader of the King's party; and being of a high spirit, he cannot away with affronts." The Royalists had yet to learn the nature of Montrose's "high spirit."

Nithsdale's letter of the 8th of May was one of those which fell into Monro's hands, and in it he had written: "I am not altogether desperate of Montrose, but grant he were changed, I am in good hope you shall not lack good affected subjects in Scotland to prosecute that point we resolved on." Though the letters found in Antrim's pocket indicated little more than the discontent of the Scottish Royalists with the existing state of things, the discovery of them caused the greatest excitement among the adherents of the Parliament, and the English leaders of the party published a Declaration, dated July 1643, in which they referred to the letters quoted above as evidence of another "plot"—a plot which proved—so it was passionately asserted—that "there was now a fixed resolution to extirpate the true Protestant religion in England, Ireland and Scotland."

While Argyll and his unacknowledged allies at Westminster were making what political capital they could out of the letters taken from Antrim's pocket, a loyal meeting was held in the north. Montrose, with his constant friend and companion, Lord Ogilvie, rode to Aberdeen, and stayed several days with the Marquis of Huntly, who entertained them with great hospitality. He accompanied them to the kirk twice on the Sunday, and the evident cordiality which existed between the two nobles, formerly so strongly opposed to each other, gave cause for admiring comment among the townspeople of Aberdeen. On Tuesday Huntly went to his place at Kelly, and the next morning Montrose, Marischal,

Ogilvie and several other Royalists joined him there. The precise nature of their deliberations is not known, but it was generally understood that Montrose wished to form a combination of the Scottish Royalists, and these meetings caused much uneasiness among the leading Covenanters.

The greatest caution was necessary in any action of this kind, for the report of a single speech against the governing party in Scotland was enough to endanger a man's liberty, estates, and—as the fate of Stewart of Ladywell had shown—even his life. At this very time the Earl of Carnwath was summoned before the Council in Edinburgh on the charge of having said to the King, “that Scotland was not content by their own rebellion to have troubled the King, but also would yet again join with the rebels in England for to ruin the King and his children.” Nothing was ever more literally true than these words, but the Covenanters, who had already resolved to “join with the rebels in England,” were so furious against Lord Carnwath that he wisely declined to put himself in their power, and fled to England for safety. Upon this he was fined ten thousand pounds (Scots), and one of his debtors was forced to pay in that sum at once to the self-constituted authorities in Edinburgh.

Montrose had learnt by hard experience to be prudent, and since his release from prison he had so conducted himself that though he had maintained his position as leader amongst the loyal lords, he had not in any way laid himself open to the attacks of his enemies, and Argyll still hoped it might be possible to detach him from the King. Argyll was incapable of understanding the absolute incorruptibility of a man like Montrose, who cared more for his own ideal of truth and honour, and for the “dear applause of merited fame,” than for all the worldly advantages that could be offered him. Nor was the chivalrous spirit, which clung all the more closely to a noble cause because it was the weaker side, any more intelligible to the dictator of the covenanting party. He knew that the counsels of Montrose had been rejected by the King and Queen, and he thought it a good time to tempt the Earl to come over to what was unquestionably the stronger side, by again offering him the highest command in the army



under Leven. It is not unlikely that Leven himself, who had perhaps detected, with the keen eye of a veteran, the promise of military genius in Montrose, was eager to secure his services for the party of the Covenanters. The attempt could do them no harm, even if it failed, while its success would remove a dangerous obstacle from their path. The proposal was therefore renewed.

As the army in which he was offered so high a position was professedly the army of the King, Montrose, instead of refusing point-blank to accept the post, had recourse to a stratagem by which he might obtain unmistakable evidence of the immediate designs of the ruling party. He made it understood that he could not accept the proffered position unless certain doubts which he felt about it could be removed, and Alexander Henderson, the Moderator of the Kirk, was appointed "to solve these scruples." Montrose readily agreed to an interview with Henderson, but, lest he should compromise himself with his own party, he requested Lord Napier and several of his loyal friends to accompany him.

Alexander Henderson was one of the best of the Covenanters, perfectly upright and unselfish. His personal respect and liking for the King caused him more than once to fall into disgrace with his own party, but no member of it was more fanatically bent upon establishing the Presbyterian model in its strict and altered form throughout England and Ireland. Of this clergyman Clarendon says that "all the bishops of Scotland put together never meddled so much with temporal affairs as did Mr Henderson."

It was in the month of June 1643, after his visit to Huntly in the north, that Montrose, with three or four of his most intimate friends, rode towards Stirling to meet the Moderator. Henderson was accompanied only by Sir James Rollock, a wealthy man of old family, whose first wife had been a sister of Montrose, and who had afterwards married a sister of Argyll. The little party of Royalists met the two emissaries of the Kirk on the banks of the Forth, not far from Stirling. After friendly courtesies on both sides, Montrose addressed himself to the Moderator, and reminding him that he had not been present at the Convention held in the previous month,

begged to be informed freely and ingenuously of the intentions of the covenanting party.

Henderson, believing that he should easily persuade Montrose to join the cause, answered plainly that they were about to send a powerful army to the assistance of "their brethren in England," and that the Covenanters of both kingdoms were resolved to bring the King to their terms or die in the attempt. He earnestly pressed Montrose to throw in his lot with the majority of the Scottish nobles, and was so carried away by his enthusiasm that he did not hesitate to add that if the Earl would accept the offers of the Estates he was sure that the few who still opposed the good cause would speedily follow his example. Henderson concluded by assuring Montrose that if he agreed to his proposals he had only to ask anything he wished for and the Convention would at once give it him. The five years that had elapsed since the beginning of the struggle in Scotland had been years of large expenditure, and the great landholders who had taken a leading part in it had suffered not only from the heavy strain put upon their resources by the war, but from the diminished prosperity of the country in general. The name of Montrose had been from the first prominent among those of the largest givers to the cause, and since he had begun to oppose its excesses he had been subject to the heavy taxation exacted by the covenanting rulers from the whole country. The law expenses which had been forced upon him in the preceding summer must still further have impoverished him, and it was believed at the time of his interview with Henderson that his estates were heavily burdened. These debts were to be paid by the Estates, and Montrose to be relieved from all pecuniary anxiety, if he would consent to their proposals; but it will readily be believed that such a bribe was powerless to induce him to abandon his principles.

Having obtained all the information he required, the Earl had no desire to prolong the interview. But he could not declare himself opposed to the scheme of the Covenanters without risking his liberty and sacrificing the object for which he had submitted to this distasteful interview, that object being to bring to the King unquestionable evidence of



the immediate danger that threatened him. Nothing, however, could induce Montrose to encourage Henderson's vain hopes, or to promise what he did not intend to perform. He found a way out of the difficulty by asking Sir James Rollock whether the offers which had just been made to him were authorised by the Convention or came only from individuals. Sir James supposed Mr Henderson had orders from the Convention, but the Moderator, having no written document to produce, could only assert that the Convention would make good all he promised. The disagreement of the messengers and the want of formality made it easy for Montrose to excuse himself from coming to any immediate conclusion on so important a matter. He bade the emissaries a courteous farewell, and they returned to their chief no wiser than they had been before they set out on their mission.

In the General Assembly, which was sitting at this time, Aug. 164 the great majority was so hostile to the royal cause that two noblemen to whom the post of Royal Commissioner was offered refused to accept it, because they saw it would be impossible to carry out the King's instructions, moderate and reasonable though they were, without incurring the violent displeasure of the Assembly. The name of Sir Thomas Hope was inserted without his knowledge in the Commission, and he got over the difficulty of the position by not attempting to execute any of the royal instructions, "for," says Baillie, "he was so wise, and so well dealt with by his sons, that he resolved to say nothing to the Church and country's prejudice." \* Sir Thomas Hope's two sons were violent Covenanters, and to their influence was added that of Argyll and the Moderator, who so overawed the old man that he gave them no trouble. The responsibility for the appointment of such a Royal Commissioner rested upon Lanerick, to whom the King had entrusted a blank commission.

The chief act of this Assembly was the drawing up and transmission to London of a new and enlarged edition of the Covenant. The Solemn League and Covenant, as the new document was entitled, differed widely from its predecessor, exchanging a policy of simple self-defence for one of unsparing

\* Baillie, vol. ii. p. 83.

attack upon the religion and liberties of others. It had for its main object the overthrow and destruction of the Church of England, the establishment throughout England and Ireland of the strictest form of Scottish Presbyterianism, and the combination in arms of the King's enemies in England and Scotland. There is a striking difference of tone as well as of aim between the two Covenants. The document of 1642 loses much of the impassioned religious earnestness which breathes through the Covenant of 1638, and includes clauses for the extirpation of prelacy and for the discovery and punishment of those who might venture to set themselves in opposition to this policy.

The Solemn League was received and signed with eagerness by the rebel Parliament, though many of them, and notably such leaders as Pym, Hampden and Cromwell, had no sympathy with its main object, that of forcing Presbyterianism upon England, and must therefore have signed it with dishonest intention. But their chances of success against the King and Prelacy depended upon the help of Scotland, and the new Covenant was sent back to Edinburgh, where it was ordered to be signed by the whole male population throughout Scotland. Those who could not write were directed to put their mark, their name being written for them by a person appointed for the purpose in each parish. The women were required to hold up their hands in token of acquiescence when the League and Covenant was read in Church. A paper of pains and penalties was affixed to the document, and by such means as these, great numbers were induced to sign who entirely disapproved of the policy which the League represented.

Together with the new Covenant, came out another document which still more astonished the north country loyalists. This was a letter headed by the King's name and sealed with the royal signet. "The Estates of our Kingdom of Scotland," so ran the letter, had entered "into a mutual League and Covenant with our Kingdom of England, for the defence of the true Protestant reformed religion in the Kirk of Scotland, and the reformation of religion in the Kirk of England, according to the Word of God, the example of the best



reformed churches, and as may bring the Kirks of both kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity of religion and Church government." This pseudo-royal letter, to which Lanerick had traitorously affixed the royal seal, went on to enjoin "all fencible persons between sixty and sixteen years of age, of whatsoever quality, rank or degree, to provide themselves with forty days' provision, with ammunition, arms and other warlike provision of all sorts," and to repair to a rendezvous at a place appointed by the Estates. Any person who disobeyed these orders was threatened with confiscation of all his goods. This letter was promulgated in August, yet in July the Covenanters, in their official communication with the English Parliament, had carefully abstained "from the mentioning of arms." \* By their diplomatic silence they kept the King for some time longer in doubt as to their intentions.

General Leslie, who was chosen to command the new army, willingly accepted the charge. "It is true," wrote Baillie, "he passed many promises to the King that he would no more fight against him, but, as he declares, it was with the express and necessary condition" not expressed, be it understood, but mentally reserved, "that religion and the country's right were not in hazard, and all indifferent men think now they are in a very evident one." †

Several noblemen, who had been esteemed faithful to the King, gave in to the pressure brought to bear upon them by Argyll, and accepted commissions in Leslie's army, but none of Montrose's personal friends were among the number.

The Earl did not await the issue. Delay might have rendered it difficult, if not impossible, to pass into England, a close watch being kept upon all who were known to be in favour of the King, and it is probable that Montrose would not have been left unmolested if the leading Covenanters had not cherished the hope that self-interest would induce their most dangerous opponent to cast in his lot with the triumphant party.

An explanation of the views and motives that determined Montrose's course at this crisis is to be found in a paper

\* Baillie, vol. ii. p. 76.

† *Ibid.*, p. 100.

entitled "The Remonstrance," which, though not written by himself, was probably drawn up at his request by Lord Napier, and was intended to be both a justification of Montrose's line of action from the beginning of the troubles and an appeal to the people of Scotland.\*

"God is our witness," says the writer, "that we were most willing to pack up all private injuries, which we profess ourselves this day to be far from resenting, if the last and greatest had not followed, viz., the joining in league with the Brownists and Independents in England to the prejudice of religion, and with the factious remainder of England to the prejudice of authority and liberty." "This League," the writer says, obliged men to take up arms against their Prince, and aimed at the abolition of Episcopacy out of the English Church, an object "contrary to the mind of most of those who subscribed the National Covenant." Further, it constrained men to blind obedience to self-constituted rulers, and involved them in perjury and disloyalty, "which League we were either constrained to subscribe against our conscience—as many were constrained to do—for which God give them repentance—or otherwise to go to perpetual prison, or quit

\* "The Remonstrance" was printed for the first time by Mr Mark Napier from a MS. in Lord Napier's handwriting, covering seven pages of small quarto. The date at which it was written is suggested by a list of the prisoners taken at Kilsyth (August 15, 1645), written also in Lord Napier's hand at the end of "The Remonstrance." The main object of the paper, which may have been drawn up under some general instructions from Montrose, is to show that the Covenant of 1638, honestly interpreted, was intended to uphold not only the liberties of Scotland's Church and people, but the King's lawful power and position, and that it was not Montrose but his opponents who had revolted from the National Covenant. The paper appealed to all fair-minded men to judge which were the traitors to God, King, and Country; the men who fomented misunderstandings between the King and his subjects, oppressed their countrymen with subsidies and newly-devised excises, and pressed them to take up arms against their Sovereign, or those who, with the Royal Commission in their hands, stood by the Reformed Religion as it had been settled in Scotland, and maintained the King's lawful and acknowledged authority, fighting only in self-defence against those who were sent forth to shed their blood. The defence is carefully and laboriously reasoned, but the style is not that of Montrose. Not only does it lack the force and fire which belong to all his proclamations and appeals to his countrymen, but it is disfigured by at least one passage of abusive fanaticism wholly foreign to the tolerant spirit in which Montrose was accustomed to treat religious subjects. If the paper was lost at Philiphaugh it is quite possible that the Marquis never saw it; but even supposing this to be the case, the document, written by one who was intimately acquainted with his beliefs and opinions, is valuable as a statement of the motives which influenced his actions during the most critical period of his life.



their country and estates. But not daring to make shipwreck of conscience, we resolved to leave the country, and, if it had been possible, to have lived under the shelter of our Prince in our neighbour nation. But finding there was no time for dallying . . . and being pressed with a lawful calling to undertake what we had sworn in our National Covenant, we found ourselves bound in conscience to take arms for the defence of our Reformed Religion, and maintenance of His Majesty's honour and liberty of the subject, rather than suffer ourselves to be misled by the misinformed multitude."

Such were the feelings and convictions which led Montrose to decide upon leaving wife and children, home and country, with the firm resolve to do what one man could to retrieve the wrong done by Scotland to "her own native King." In his interview with Henderson he had obtained the clearest possible confirmation of his suspicions as to the real designs of the Covenanters, and he was eager to impart what he knew to the King, that the royal forces might, at any rate, be prepared for the fresh and formidable opponents about to be brought against them. All he had heard about the negotiations between the General Assembly and the English Parliament showed that the danger was urgent, and he lost no time in laying before his most trustworthy friends the course which alone, in his opinion, was left open to men of honour and loyalty.

He entreated them all to go with him in a body to the King to inform him of the pressing danger, and to prevail on him by their united influence to take such measures as might, if possible, defeat the designs of his enemies. But the loyal noblemen were thoroughly disheartened. The cause, they said, was hopeless, and they had made sacrifices enough to loyalty. They would stay quietly at home and pray for happier times. Montrose stood alone, but no difficulty could daunt him. Strong in his conviction of the justice of his cause, he was ready to face any odds in its defence, and he resolved to wait no longer, but to go alone to the King if no one would accompany him. One faithful friend refused to desert him. Lord Ogilvie went with him,

and everywhere on their adventurous journey they were cheered by the news of royalist successes. It was about the middle of August when they arrived at Oxford—a strangely transformed Oxford, where the grave dons and black-gowned students were almost lost in a crowd of gay courtiers, and where the Queen and her ladies were in possession of Merton. The King was absent, directing the siege of Gloucester, and the Queen, still trusting the Hamiltons, listened politely to Montrose's representations, but declined to notice any statement that contradicted their reports. Finding that he could make no impression in this quarter, Montrose followed the King to Gloucester, but there he was equally unsuccessful, for Charles also had implicit faith in Hamilton, and it was clear that if Montrose's account of the condition of affairs in Scotland was not exaggerated then Hamilton and his brothers were playing false.

Many of the courtiers also did their best to throw obstacles in the way of this straightforward and ardent young Scotsman, from whom they instinctively recoiled because he was so unlike themselves. These men attributed his vigorous counsels and desire for immediate action to hatred and envy of the Hamiltons, whose prudence and integrity they praised, whilst they spoke disparagingly of Montrose, his youth and his supposed rashness and ambition. But soon after the unsuccessful issue of the siege of Gloucester news arrived from Scotland which unmistakably proved the truth of all that he had asserted. Several of the loyal lords, who had left the country in disgust at Hamilton's extraordinary acquiescence in the proceedings of the Convention, came to Oxford bringing full confirmation of the accusations which Montrose had made against the two brothers. Hamilton, who had received his promised reward and was now a duke, wrote, towards the end of the year, to inform the King that he could no longer prevent the covenanting army from uniting their forces with those of the Parliament. This confession had been put off till the very last moment, for Leslie's troops, consisting of about eighteen thousand foot and two thousand horse, were already on their march and were expected to cross the Border almost immediately.



The news was a terrible blow to the King, who had been persuaded to believe that if any such scheme really existed among the "contented people," Hamilton's influence and interest in the country would prevent it from ever being put into execution. The Duke and his brother endeavoured in their letters to excuse themselves, and made the most of their refusal to sign the League and Covenant, and of the persecution and losses they said they had suffered from Argyll's party on this account. But facts were against them, and it was the general opinion of the Scottish Royalists that the confiscation of property belonging to the Hamiltons was only a pretence and a blind to induce the King to continue his favour to them.

Charles was at last undeceived, but the mischief was done. He was too clear-sighted in military matters not to see that this strong, well-disciplined Scottish contingent would turn the scale against him, and in despair he sent for Montrose and asked him what could be done. The Earl's reply to his Sovereign's appeal was short and characteristic. He promised either to reduce the rebels in Scotland to obedience, of which he did not altogether despair, or to die in the attempt. The King, cheered by his courage and confidence, desired him to take two days to deliberate upon the measures he considered necessary, and dismissed him graciously.

At the time appointed he was again admitted to the royal presence, and he then clearly described the nature of the enterprise he wished to undertake. Scotland was, as he explained, entirely under the command of the Covenanters. They had garrisoned all the fortresses, they were well supplied with arms and ammunition, and they were strengthened by a close league, offensive and defensive, with the English rebel Parliament. The situation appeared to be absolutely without hope or possibility of recovery, but there was one man, and one man alone, in the three kingdoms who believed that in spite of overwhelming difficulties Scotland might yet be won back for the King. "I will not," said Montrose, "distrust God's assistance in a righteous cause, and if it shall please Your Majesty to lay your commands upon me for this purpose, your affairs will at any rate be in

no worse case than they are at present, even if I should not succeed. I shall not require very much at Your Majesty's hands. A small body of troops from Ireland, landed on the west coast of Scotland, a party of horse from the Marquis of Newcastle in the north, to enable me to cut my way through the lowlands, a few troops of German horse from the King of Denmark, if they may be procured, and lastly, arms and ammunition from abroad to be transported into Scotland. This is all that is needed. Success depends upon God, and must be left to His Providence, but I do not despair of winning Scotland to be a help to Your Majesty's cause yet."

The King's failing hopes recovered as he listened to the young Earl's clear and definite proposals. He sent at once for the Earl of Antrim, who undertook to land two thousand Irish soldiers in Argyllshire by the 1st of April 1644. A large proportion of these so-called Irish troops were Macdonalds of the Isles, who had been driven to escape to the opposite shores by the oppression of their powerful and ambitious neighbours the Campbells. Arms were to be ordered from abroad, and the King offered Montrose a commission, making him Lieutenant-Governor of Scotland and Commander of the royal forces in that country. But the Earl, whose desires were fixed not upon high-sounding titles but upon the success of the cause, feared that such a commission would excite the jealousy of the Scottish nobles whose help he was most anxious to secure. He therefore asked the King to confer the supreme command upon his nephew, Prince Maurice, and his request was complied with.\* Charles was not famous for insight, but he saw at last and once for all that here was a man to be entirely trusted. No one who has studied the portraits of Montrose can fail to realise the help and comfort which that calm, strong, gentle face of his must have brought to the harassed monarch, beset as he was, even at that moment of pressing difficulty and distress, by suitors who cared nothing for the welfare of King or country in comparison with the satisfaction of their own selfish hopes of profit or advancement.

\* The higher commission was bestowed upon him in the following year, and is dated 25th June 1645.



Montrose had already begun to prepare for his departure, when, towards the middle of December, news came that Hamilton and Lanerick were on their way to Oxford. It was a strange and unexpected step on their part, but they trusted to the tenacity of the King's affection for them, and they probably believed that, once admitted to his presence, they would quickly regain their former influence over him. Many of the King's friends at Oxford were of the same opinion, and feared that in spite of all that had happened he would be weak enough to receive them again into his confidence and favour.

Montrose, feeling certain that if this came to pass any attempts to bring back Scotland to its allegiance must be defeated, went to the King and begged to be allowed to go abroad if His Majesty meant to restore the men who had so often deceived him to their old position in his councils. He could not, he said, stand by and see his country ruined. He had no wish that the King should use any severity to his former favourites, he only entreated that they might not be suffered to do any further mischief. There were others who pressed the same warning upon the King, and the result was that on their arrival at Oxford the brothers were at once ordered to remain at their lodgings under a guard. By the royal command, Montrose, Nithsdale, Kinnoul, Ogilvie and several others had already been examined upon oath on the subject of the accusations brought against the Hamiltons, and their written depositions left no room for doubt that both the brothers had been guilty of disloyalty and double-dealing.

Though the Duke's apologists have tried to cast on Montrose the whole burden of having thrown suspicion upon the Hamiltons, he was not even the most important witness against them. The facts which told most strongly against both were their disloyal conduct at the late Convention in Edinburgh, at which Montrose had not been present, and in especial Lanerick's use of the royal signet to raise an army against the King.

Charles had intended to have examined the accused noblemen before the Council board, confronting them with the witnesses, and they had been at once supplied with copies

of the depositions against them, but the second morning after their arrival Lanerick made his escape and rode straight to London, where he was warmly welcomed by the Scottish Commissioners and the Parliament. Baillie, who was at this time in London, gave up his chamber and bed to Lanerick, and wrote to his friends at home that when the Earl came to Scotland he would "tell many tales," referring evidently to the information he had picked up during his very short stay in Oxford. After this Lanerick acted openly and vigorously for the Covenant, and before long he was preferred to be a ruling elder in the General Assembly.

The Covenanters expressed much sympathy with Hamilton, and talked of a "speedy rescue of him if living, or a severe revenge of him if dead." But Hamilton's life was in no danger from his indulgent master. As, in the existing state of Scotland, it was impossible to give the Duke a fair and immediate trial, and as his brother's flight and favourable reception by the King's enemies had thrown a deeper shade of suspicion upon him, he was sent a prisoner to Pendennis Castle in Cornwall.

Though Hamilton was for the time safely out of the way, Montrose had good reason to believe that there were still some about the Court who were in secret sympathy with the covenanting faction in Scotland, and since it was impossible to say what mischief might not arise to the royal cause from the presence in council of spies and traitors, he drew up a Bond or Declaration, which protested in strong terms against the Solemn League and Covenant, and against the invasion of England by a Scottish army. All the Scotsmen then at Court were invited to sign this bond, and though it was enforced by no pains and penalties, it called forth the most violent indignation from the Covenanters.

They were at this moment hastening to point their cannon against the very person of the King, and yet they resented above all things any charge against themselves of treason or disloyalty. They had defied the King's authority, usurped his power in their own country, and were sending their armies into England to help his enemies; but they still seemed to think that their profuse expressions of loyalty



would cover the rebelliousness of their actions, and it never occurred to them that there was any dishonesty in using Charles's name and Privy Seal to raise the armies with which they proposed to fight against their own native King, as they continued to call him.

It cannot surprise anyone that this self-deceiving and self-complacent conduct should have called forth the honest indignation of those who found themselves stigmatized as rebels and traitors by their countrymen, for no other reason than that they were straightforwardly acting upon those very principles of loyalty and obedience to their Sovereign which were so loudly professed by their opponents.

Montrose's "wicked Bond and Oath," as it was called by Baillie—who clearly believed that his own party alone had the right to frame oaths and covenants—was a vigorous protest against the action of the Covenanters in making war upon their acknowledged Sovereign. The following sentences are probably those which most strongly excited Baillie's anger, and they are quoted that the reader may judge how far his violent condemnation of the Bond was justified.

"And we do hereby profess and declare that we esteem the said pretended Convention (at Edinburgh) to be a presumptuous, illegal and traitorous meeting, as being designed to excite sedition and rebellion in that kingdom, and a most unjust invasion of this. And as we do utterly disclaim and abhor the same, so do we in like manner all committees, general or particular, flowing from the same, and all acts, ordinances and decrees made and given therein, and particularly that damnable Covenant taken and imposed by the rebels of both kingdoms, which we heartily and unfeignedly detest, and shall never enter into by force, persuasion, or any respect whatsoever, as being a most impious imposition upon men's consciences to engage them under false pretences of religion in treason and rebellion against their Sovereign."

"And we do further renounce and detest any authority, either of the Convention or Parliament, as to the levying of arms, upon any colour whatsoever, without His Majesty's consent. And we do sincerely protest that we do esteem our countrymen's present taking of arms, and their invading this

realm of England, to be an act of high treason and rebellion, and hold ourselves obliged by allegiance, and by the Act of Pacification, to oppose and withstand the same." \*

It may be questioned whether it is ever advisable to invite signatures to such declarations of belief or opinion as were common in the seventeenth century, and it is very certain that whenever these oaths were made in any degree compulsory, they were in their effects highly immoral. This particular Bond, however, was purely voluntary, and may be compared advantageously with the "Sacred Vow and Covenant" drawn up by Pym and his party a few months earlier than the date of Montrose's Oxford Bond, on the discovery of a supposed royalist plot to deliver London to the King.† This very stringent oath was pressed, not only upon every member of the scanty Parliament at Westminster, but upon the parliamentary army and the whole city of London, "and whosoever refused to take that Covenant," writes Clarendon, "needed no other charge to be concluded and prosecuted as the highest malignant."

Montrose's Bond was offered only to the Scotsmen of position who were resident at that date in Oxford, and according to Wishart, two of those nearest in touch with the King were most unwilling to sign it. These two were the Earl of Traquair and Will Murray of the Bedchamber, the latter of whom has already figured in this history as a spy for the Covenanters. Ever since he had acted in that capacity during the "Incident," he had been openly hostile to Montrose, but the King still trusted him, and had quite lately granted him the title of Lord Dysart. The patent did not, however, pass the seals till a much later period.

\* *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 119.

† See Clarendon's *History*, vol. ii. p. 255, where the vow is given *verbatim*.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SKIRMISHES ON THE BORDERS

But if thou wilt be constant then  
And faithful of thy word,  
I'll make thee glorious by my pen,  
And famous by my sword.  
I'll serve thee in such noble ways  
Were never heard before ;  
I'll crown and deck thee with all bays,  
And love thee evermore."

MONTROSE.

MONTROSE's stay in Oxford lasted about six months; critical 1644 months, during which the Solemn League and Covenant was accepted and sworn to by the London Parliament, and the first battle of Newbury was fought. In that fruitless battle, and in several skirmishes with the enemy which took place during the autumn, Montrose may with almost absolute certainty be assumed to have taken part as a volunteer. But it seems probable that he had a very slight share in the gay Court life which gathered round the Queen, and to which the fair University city, with its stately colleges, its grey cloisters, and its enchanting gardens, formed an attractive background. In some respects his graceful person and winning manners fitted him well to shine in Courts, but except for these external gifts he had nothing in common with the frivolous courtiers who crowded round Henrietta Maria, or with the jealous and discontented lords who made the King's life miserable by their insatiable demands for honours and offices which he could not bestow upon one of them without exciting the envy and malice of all the rest. The only favour Montrose desired was to be allowed to go forth like a knight-errant of old to defend with his sword the cause which was to him the cause of truth and justice, of honour and loyalty.

There were men in Oxford who could sympathize with

such aims, and amongst these he sought his friends. To the King's faithful old servant, Endymion Porter, he became warmly attached, and he made a deep impression upon Lord Digby, who had the reputation of being the handsomest and bravest Cavalier in England, and whose great talents and generous nature made him a very attractive person, though he was wanting in the steady principle and self-control which were the main secrets of Montrose's strength. It was at this time also that Montrose made the acquaintance of Sir Edward Hyde, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hyde, with all his shrewdness and capacity, was quite incapable of understanding the deeper nature of an idealist like Montrose, but he was struck by the modest demeanour of the young Scottish Earl, and by his grave deference to the opinions of older men than himself. Besides his new English acquaintances, Montrose had a devoted circle of friends amongst his fellow-countrymen at Oxford, chief among whom was Sir Robert Spottiswoode, at this time appointed by the King Secretary of State for Scotland, in place of the Earl of Lanerick, who had fled to join the Covenanters.

During these months Montrose had necessarily seen much of the King, and a nearer acquaintance only deepened the feeling of love and reverence with which he had come to regard his Sovereign, while Charles, on his side, never from that time forth wavered in his warm affection for the Earl. Entirely unlike as they were in character and temperament, each had points which strongly attracted the other. Charles, whose nature always craved someone to lean on, found in Montrose one on whom he could safely depend; an adviser, prompt, clear-headed, resolute; his very opposite in these respects, yet like himself in cultured gentleness of character. The farewell between them was full of hope on both sides, and it is most unlikely that either of them thought they were looking on each other for the last time.

Montrose's commission was signed on the 1st of February, and before the end of the month he set off for the north, accompanied by Lord Ogilvie and several other Scottish Cavaliers with their attendants. Staying in York for two days, he sent on Colonel Cochrane to the Marquis of New-



castle, and quickly followed his messenger to Durham, where the royalist forces were quartered in close proximity to the covenanting army commanded by Leven. Newcastle, though he received the King's Scottish Lieutenant-General with kindness and courtesy, assured him that he could not, in so dangerous a crisis, give him any effectual help, and Montrose could not persuade him to spare more than a small escort of ill-appointed cavalry, about a hundred strong, together with two small brass field-pieces. Newcastle, however, sent orders to the officers of the Northumberland and Cumberland militia to give Montrose what assistance they could, and accordingly he was joined by about eight hundred foot and three troops of horse from those counties. The little army was further strengthened by two hundred Cavaliers, most of them being noblemen and gentlemen who had served as officers in France, Germany or England.

With this small force of about thirteen hundred men Montrose crossed the Border on the 13th of April, and advanced along the banks of the River Annan; but he had not gone far before most of the Cumberland militia, worked upon by agents acting for Sir Richard Graham of Netherby, mutinied and turned back. With his remaining troops he marched forward to Dumfries, which surrendered without resistance, and there he raised the royal standard. He found a friend in the Provost, Sir James Maxwell, "a true King's man," who paid dearly for this peaceful reception of the small royalist forces. He was executed by the Covenanters at Edinburgh in the following July.

It had been Montrose's intention to penetrate to that central part of Scotland where lay his own estates with those of Napier, Keir and other Royalists; but with the small body of troops at his command it was impossible to make his way across the intervening covenanting districts. He therefore waited in Dumfries as long as he could, hoping to hear of the landing of the Irish troops promised by the Earl of Antrim; but though the time agreed upon was already past, there was no sign of their coming.

During the few days that Montrose waited at Dumfries an unknown messenger brought him a strange and startling

proposal, presenting him at the same time with a well-known token from his niece, Margaret Napier, the Lady of Keir, as a voucher for his good faith. The Earl was invited to come at once to Stirling, where he would find the castle and town, with the regiment that garrisoned it, as well as the town of Perth, at his service. The strangest part of the affair was that the commander of the regiment in question was Lord Sinclair, the nobleman who had undertaken to ransack Montrose's private repositories in the vain search for articles of accusation against him at the time of his imprisonment in Edinburgh Castle.

The proposal to Montrose appears to have been honestly intended. Lord Sinclair and his subordinate officer, Sir James Turner (a well-known Scottish mercenary of the type of Sir Walter Scott's Dugald Dalgetty), had come to the conclusion that the Solemn League and Covenant was a disloyal combination against lawful authority, and the only way in which they could escape signing it was by joining the King's newly appointed Lieutenant-General in Scotland. After several consultations with Lords Erskine and Napier, and some others of Montrose's friends and relations, it had been agreed to send two messengers, one from the garrison, and one from Lord Napier, with the proposal related above. Lord Sinclair's envoy alone reached his destination, and Montrose would probably have seized the offered opportunity with his usual quick decision if tidings had not reached him, almost at the same moment, that the new levies, five thousand strong, which Argyll had raised for the destruction of the small band of Royalists, were on their march to Dumfries, led by Lord Calendar, a nobleman who only a few months before had agreed with Montrose to propose vigorous measures in defence of the royal authority.

In face of so overwhelming a force it was impossible either to strike across country towards Stirling or to retain Dumfries, and the venturesome little troop of Cavaliers had no choice but to retreat at once to Carlisle. Lord Calendar immediately occupied Dumfries, and Montrose had reason to congratulate himself that he had not trusted even his niece's token, when he heard that with the army sent to destroy him



marched Lord Sinclair and his regiment. The lynx-eyed ruler of Scotland had divined that all was not right in that quarter, and removing the regiment from Stirling, he had ordered men and officers to sign the League and Covenant and to march at once into England with Calendar's army. To avoid being thrown into prison Sinclair and his officers obeyed, but the conscience of Major James Turner, mercenary soldier though he was, reproached him for the treachery, and in his *Memoirs* he thus comments upon the doubtful morality of the action:—

“Upon these grounds my Lord Sinclair's regiment marched into England, and I with them, and made a fashion (for indeed it was no better) to take the Covenant, that under pretence of the Covenant we might ruin the Covenanters, a thing though too much practised in a corrupt world yet in itself dishonest, sinful and disallowable, for it is certain that no evil should be done that good may come of it. Neither did any good at all come of this.”

Thus Montrose's first attempt proved a failure, and its only result was to bring upon his head a sentence of excommunication, which was pronounced against him in the East Kirk at Edinburgh, early in April, and was by Argyll's orders repeated from every pulpit in Scotland. The Marquis of Huntly, who had headed a singularly ill-conducted rising in the north, was excommunicated at the same time. Every minister was compelled to give in and sign a list of all persons in his parish who had risen with the Gordons, or who were supposed to be disaffected towards the Covenant, and the most tyrannical measures were enforced against all who were in any way concerned in the affair.

The Church which thus ministered to the political designs of its lay and clerical rulers had expelled its bishops, partly on the ground that they meddled too much with civil affairs. But no bishops ever made so unjustifiable a use of ecclesiastical powers as did these Scottish presbyters, when, at the bidding of Argyll, they turned excommunication into a mere instrument of political vengeance. Montrose had committed no breach of the moral law, he held no heretical opinions; the only crime of which he could be accused was

that he had accepted a commission from the Sovereign who was acknowledged by the Covenanters themselves to be their lawful King.

When Montrose returned to Carlisle both York and Newcastle were besieged by Scottish armies. Sir J. Glenham, the Governor of Newcastle, wrote to the leaders of the invading army a letter which so forcibly expressed the royalist point of view at the time that it deserves to be quoted. "We could not have imagined," he writes, "that they who through His Majesty's goodness enjoy a settlement of their Church and State according to their own desires should needlessly and ungratefully embroil themselves in a business that concerns them not. . . . No order of any committee or committees whatever, of men or angels, can give them power to march into the bowels of another kingdom, to make offensive war against their natural Sovereign, upon the empty pretence of evil counsellors that could never yet be named. . . . To go about by force to change the religion and laws established is gross treason, without all contradiction, and in this case it argues strongly who have been the fomentors and contrivers of all our troubles; no Covenant whatsoever or with whomsoever can justify these proceedings, or oblige a subject to run such disloyal courses. . . . Yourselves cannot allege that you are in any wise provoked by us, nor are we conscious to ourselves of the least intention to molest you. The ends that you propose are plausible indeed to them that do not understand them; the blackest designs did never want the same pretences. If by the Protestant religion you intend our Articles, which are the publick profession of our Church and Book of Common Prayer, established by Act of Parliament, you need not trouble yourselves; we be ready to defend them with our blood. If it be otherwise, it is plain to all the world that it is not the preservation but the innovation of religion that you seek, howsoever styled by you, reformation, and what calling have you to reform us by the sword? We don't remember that ever the like indignity was offered by one nation to another, the less to the greater, that those men who hitherto have pleaded so vehemently for liberty of conscience should now assume a power to impose a



law upon the consciences of their fellow-subjects. A vanquished nation would scarce endure such terms from their conquerors; but this we are sure of; that it is the way to make the Protestant religion odious to all monarchs, Christians and pagans.

"Your other ends, that is, the honour and happiness of the King, and the public peace and liberty of his dominions, are so manifestly contrary to your practice that there needs no other motive to withdraw you from such a course as tends directly to make His Majesty contemptible at home and abroad, and fill his dominions with blood and murder." \*

This letter was subscribed by Glenham and fourteen other gentlemen, "But oh, for pity!" exclaims the honest chronicler who preserved it, "our army would not hear this wise counsel but go forward in their rebellion."

The Covenanters having garrisoned the castle of Morpeth, a post of some importance, Montrose, with his small band of followers and his brass field-pieces, laid siege to this stronghold, and forced it, after an obstinate resistance for twenty days, to surrender. He granted honourable conditions to the garrison, allowing them to march out with the honours of war, and to return to Scotland, only exacting from them the promise that they would not in future bear arms against the King. The day on which the castle was taken the late governor and his four captains were asked to dine with the Earl at his quarters. They readily accepted the invitation, not knowing perhaps that they were rendering themselves liable to heavy censures for associating in any manner with an excommunicated person. While Montrose was entertaining them with all courtesy and hospitality, a private message came to the governor to the effect that his soldiers had been barbarously treated by the English foot, who had beaten them with the butt-ends of their muskets, and stripped them of some of their clothing. The governor's face betraying his displeasure, Montrose asked him what news he had received.

"Such," said the governor, "as I am persuaded Your Excellency will not be well pleased with when you shall understand that the Articles of Capitulation are broken."

\* Spalding, p. 370.

"What?" asked the Earl, his eyes sparkling with indignation, "who durst break any of them?" And upon being informed of what had taken place he immediately rose from table, and sending for the English officers, he commanded them instantly to repair to their respective companies, and to cause their men to restore everything they had taken from the Scottish soldiers, and that upon their highest peril as they would answer to him.\*

Montrose took a smaller fort at the mouth of the Tyne, and permitted his prisoners to return home on the same conditions as those he had granted to the garrison at Morpeth. He succeeded in throwing supplies of corn and provisions into Newcastle, and in many ways he harassed the enemy's forces, thereby exciting the alarm and indignation of the Covenanters. The King recognised these successes by making Montrose a Marquis. The patent is dated at Oxford, 6th May 1644.

While busy collecting recruits, and still doing what service he could in the north, Montrose received a sudden summons from Prince Rupert. He marched at once, with all the men he could gather, to join that fiery soldier, but before he reached the royalist army the battle of Marston Moor had been fought and lost, and the tide had finally turned in favour of the Parliament, or rather, as it turned out, in favour of Colonel Cromwell, to whom the great success of the rebel army was largely due.

Montrose remained for a short time with the defeated army, hoping to obtain men for his expedition to Scotland, and at one time he seemed on the point of gaining his object, for Prince Rupert offered him a thousand of his cavalry; but the offer was withdrawn the very next day, and Montrose, who had given up all his own recruits to the Prince, returned to Carlisle, accompanied by a small following of nobles and gentlemen.

\* *Memoirs of the Somervilles*, quoted by Napier.



## CHAPTER XVII

### A PERILOUS ADVENTURE

"His stately mien as well implied  
A high-born heart, a martial pride,  
As if a baron's crest he bore,  
And sheathed in armour trod the shore.  
His ready speech flowed fair and free  
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,  
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland  
Less used to sue than to command."

*The Lady of the Lake.*

WHILST Montrose was striving in vain to force an entrance **1644** into Scotland, that he might redeem his pledge to the King, and either win back his native country to its allegiance or lose his life in the attempt, Argyll was taking vigorous measures against the loyal clans in the north. The Marquis of Huntly's rising was of so aimless and desultory a character that it was worse than useless. He was driven into resistance by an order from the Committee of Estates directing the Sheriff of Aberdeen and Banff to seize upon his person, houses, rents and goods, without taking any legal process against him. In self-defence he raised his clan, but he did little more than imprison a few of the leading Covenanters of the district and take possession of all the horses and arms he could lay hands on, at the same time feeding his disorderly followers on the provisions of his opponents; imitating, in fact, in a modified degree, the doings of the Covenanters under Major Monro in that same district three years earlier.

A raid was also made by some of the Gordons upon the town of Montrose, in which much property was destroyed and one townsman killed. Such actions could only bring discredit upon the royal cause, and when at the end of about six weeks Huntly found that the Covenanters were raising a formidable army against him, he lost heart, fled by sea to the

coast of Sutherland, and concealed himself in the wilds of Strathnaver.

Montrose, writing from Preston in July 1644, thus told the news to Sir Robert Spottiswoode at Oxford: "The Marquis of Huntly was once very strong, and, as I am certainly informed, about five thousand horse and foot; but the business was unhappily carried, and they all disbanded as misfortunately as heretofore without stroke striking." It is easy to read between the lines the feeling of repressed indignation with which Montrose told his friend of the ignominious collapse of so fine a body of fighting men. With such a force he believed that Scotland might be delivered from the tyranny of Argyll, and he was soon to show the world what great things could be done for the royal cause with an army far smaller and worse armed than that which Huntly had at his command.

Left without a leader, the Royalists of the north shifted for themselves as best they could, and waited with well-founded anxiety for the approach of Argyll and his army. Early in May the covenanting forces, six thousand strong, came to Aberdeen, and their leader, keeping with him a regiment of five hundred Irish troops, much dreaded for their wild and disorderly ways, turned aside to visit the Place of Drum, whose young laird, Alexander Irvine, had taken part in Huntly's rising, rather against the will of his father, an old man of cautious if not of timid temperament.

Most of the historical Scottish houses of the seventeenth century that were not destroyed in the civil wars have been altered and modernized beyond recognition during the last hundred years, but the Castle of Drum stands to-day as it stood two hundred and fifty years ago, a type of a fine old Scottish fortified "place." The great central tower dating from the twelfth century, with walls fifteen feet thick, was of impregnable strength, and the fine picturesque mass of building added in later and more settled times, present to us now exactly the same striking and attractive picture that they offered to the eyes of Argyll and his fierce followers when, on a May morning in 1644, they marched up in hostile array to the fair and already ancient home of the Irvines.



No resistance was attempted. So great was the terror inspired by Argyll, that not a single man had remained to face him. The old Lady Irvine and Argyll's own niece, Lady Mary Gordon, wife of the young Laird of Drum, with their women-servants, had stayed behind, with some faint hope of saving their home and household treasures from the vengeance of the Covenanters. But all in vain. Ties of blood never stood between Argyll and his vengeance on those who dared oppose him. The two ladies did all they could to welcome their kinsman and his train of five hundred soldiers, but, taking no notice of their offered hospitality, he ordered them and their women to be at once turned out of doors. Wrapped in grey plaids, and mounted on two farm horses, the unfortunate ladies sought refuge with a friendly good-wife in Aberdeen, while Argyll and his men plundered their stately home, wantonly destroying its internal fittings and seizing upon all the rents and produce of the estate.

Argyll's next exploit was to march against Kelly, a house which belonged to Gordon of Haddo, one of the bravest and most distinguished of Huntly's followers. Having surrounded the house, which was very strongly built and capable of defence, he summoned the inhabitants to come out, threatening that in case of a refusal they should be all killed. Some attempts were made to obtain terms, but Argyll was merciless, and Haddo, for the sake of his six young children, who were with him in the house, yielded without further resistance. Kelly, with all the buildings and farms belonging to it, was destroyed, and Sir John was carried prisoner to Edinburgh, where in July he was tried by a covenanting committee and condemned to be beheaded. His last words were: "I recommend my soul to God, and my six children to His Majesty's care, for whose sake I die this day."

Haddo was a man of high position and good estate, and being much respected and beloved in his own part of the country, his execution, without warrant from any lawful authority, spread dismay and terror among the northern Royalists. The estate of Kelly was confiscated, and no part of it given to Haddo's orphan children, who were brought up by the charity of some of their friends. The houses of other

Royalists were treated in much the same manner, and a heavy price being put upon the heads of all the principal men who had taken arms with Huntly, many of them were captured and imprisoned. Among these were the two young Irvines of Drum, who had escaped by sea, but were compelled by the illness of the young wife, Lady Mary, to land on the coast of Caithness, where they fell into the hands of Francis Sinclair, son of the Earl of Caithness. This man, for the sake of the high reward set upon their heads, sent the two young Irvines prisoners to Edinburgh, and they were closely shut up in the Tolbooth. Of their terrible sufferings there more will be told later on.

Huntly's ineffectual attempt for the King had been mercilessly punished. The whole of the north country was plundered and oppressed by Argyll's fierce clansmen, who followed their chieftain without ever inquiring what they were fighting for. They spared, according to Spalding, neither Covenanter nor anti-Covenanter, minister nor layman, and the country people fled at their approach with all they could carry, leaving their homes desolate. Even ardent Covenanters began to grow weary of the heavy taxation laid upon them by their self-constituted rulers, and to sigh for the good old times when honest burghers had carried on their crafts and occupations without fear of committees or forced loans. But no one dared to breathe a word against any of these impositions, since any expression of discontent was certain to bring its author into trouble, under the highly organized system of surveillance which existed in every parish. Every minister was bound, "under his oath," to inscribe in a "roll" the names of all persons in his parish who had not signed the Covenant, or who, having signed it, had since showed any symptoms of disaffection to the cause. If he was slack in his censures he was himself liable to be put down on the roll of a brother minister, and all the rolls were given up at a certain date to a sub-committee of twelve ministers—chosen for their zeal for the Covenant—who instituted proceedings against all "malignants" or "disaffected persons." The Kirk had become, under the management of a small, strong clique of nobles and ministers, a



powerful political organization from end to end of the country.

Argyll left Aberdeen at the end of May and began his journey southward with almost kingly state. Nobles, barons and burgesses attended him bare-headed, and with every mark of reverence. He probably believed when he returned to Edinburgh that the Royalists of the north would trouble him no more for a long time to come; but he had left Montrose out of his calculations, and his dream of easy, unchallenged rule in Scotland was destined to be rudely dispelled.

Montrose, convinced by the failure of his attempt to force an entrance into Scotland from the south that he would never attain his end by ordinary methods, was about to translate into prompt and vivid action the sentiment of his well-known lines:

"He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who puts it not unto the touch  
To win or lose it all."

In such a frame of mind as this he had returned to Carlisle about the middle of July, still accompanied by his faithful band of Cavaliers. They were naturally much discouraged by the result of their dash into the Lowlands, and all were convinced that without some reasonable prospect of support any second attempt would do more harm than good. As the only way of obtaining trustworthy information of the state of affairs, Montrose sent Lord Ogilvie and Sir William Rollock into Scotland, in disguise, to ascertain whether the long-expected Irish troops had landed in the west. In about a fortnight Ogilvie and his companions returned, with no tidings of the Irish, and with a most dispiriting account of the state of the country. Everything, they said, was lost. All the towns, forts and passes were in the hands of the Covenanters, and no one dared to say a word in favour of the King. Even those noblemen who, only a few months ago, had called themselves Royalists now seemed devoted to the Covenant, and nothing could be hoped from them.

This melancholy report gave the finishing blow to the faint hopes of Montrose's followers, and when he called them

together to consider what was best to be done, some advised that he should go to Oxford and explain to the King the impossibility of doing anything for the royal cause in the then desperate state of affairs in Scotland. Others recommended him to return his commission in a letter and to go abroad to wait for a more favourable opportunity, but all agreed that, for the present at least, nothing could be attempted. Montrose listened to their suggestions without opposition, for he saw that he could no longer hope to take with him to Scotland the brave Cavaliers who had followed him faithfully for the last three or four months. But he differed from the bravest of his followers in possessing that rare combination of daring and patience which enabled him to face and overcome difficulties supposed by them to be absolutely insuperable. He had devoted himself to the service of his distressed Sovereign in the spirit of a knight-errant of old, taking no account of the personal risks involved, and though he made no protestations, but, on the contrary, listened quietly to the proposals of his dejected advisers, he resolved within himself that he would carry out his purpose, even if he had to make his way alone through the hostile Lowlands of Scotland.

To secure secrecy and prevent discussion, he acquiesced in a proposal to return to Oxford, and accompanied his friends two days on their journey thither. To Lord Ogilvie alone he confided his secret purpose, and entrusted this faithful adherent with papers for the King which clearly stated the causes that had prevented the original plan from being carried out. Ogilvie was also to inform His Majesty that there was only one way left in which, as Montrose believed, the royal cause could be effectually served in Scotland, and that a very desperate way for those concerned in it, but he was to add that "the business was still very feasible, if only the right courses were taken."

Having given his instructions to Lord Ogilvie, Montrose privately left the band of Cavaliers at nightfall, on the second day of their journey, and hastened back to the north, leaving servants and baggage behind, in order that his absence might not be noticed. The instructions carried by Ogilvie never reached the King, for within a day or two after



Montrose had turned back the whole party was captured at Ribble Bridge by a strong troop of the parliamentary army, and was sent by Lord Fairfax to the Scots at Newcastle. They were finally taken to Edinburgh, where they endured a long and close imprisonment, until Montrose released them in the summer of the following year.

Knowing nothing of the misfortunes of his friends, and of his own narrow escape—for if he had fallen into the hands of Argyll, the scaffold and not imprisonment would have been his fate—he lost no time in making his desperate venture. He chose two companions for his dangerous journey—Sir William Rollock, who had already proved himself well acquainted with the country, and Major Sibbald, a man of good reputation for coolness and courage. They assumed the rôle of two covenanting troopers, and Montrose, disguised as a groom, acted as their servant, and rode a lean, jaded-looking horse, leading another in his hand.

Since the battle of Marston Moor the north of England had been no safe country for the King's friends, for Leven's army had returned to lay siege to Newcastle, and troops of parliamentary soldiers were everywhere to be met with. Every pass into Scotland was so closely watched by the Covenanters that it was both difficult and dangerous for the disguised Royalists to cross the Borders, but, protected by their assumed character, the little party pushed on without hindrance, and met with no adventure till they reached the domains of Sir Richard Graham of Netherby, a man who had been raised from a comparatively humble position through the influence of the first Duke of Buckingham, and had received estates and a baronetcy from the King. Near Netherby one of Sir Richard's retainers, believing the three horsemen to belong to Leven's army, told them in confidence that his master was on very good terms with the Covenanters, and had undertaken to give the General secret information of any Royalists who might come that way. Little did the man imagine that one of these troopers was the man of all others whom his party desired to entrap.

Not long after the travellers had parted from Sir Richard's servant they met a Scottish soldier who had served under the

Marquis at Newcastle. Montrose's face and figure, once seen, were not easily forgotten, and the man went straight up to the pretended groom and saluted him by his proper title. Montrose, anxious to avert discovery, tried to persuade the man he was mistaken, but the soldier was positive and exclaimed: "What! do I not know my Lord Marquis of Montrose well enough? But go your way and God be with you." Montrose, seeing that it was useless to try and conceal his identity from his unwelcome admirer, spoke kindly to him and gave him some gold pieces. The man proved faithful and never revealed a secret which would have made him rich for life.

The incident was disquieting to Montrose's companions, for it showed them the great difficulty of effectually disguising him, and the impossibility of entirely concealing an air of command which accorded ill with his assumed character. When it is remembered that ever since the beginning of the disturbances in Scotland Montrose had stood out more prominently before the eyes of his countrymen than any other man, not even excepting Argyll, it seems as if nothing short of a miracle could have made it possible for him to pass undiscovered through the midst of so many watchful enemies.

The three Cavaliers pressed on with all possible speed, not sparing their horses, nor resting, except when it was absolutely necessary, until, after four days and nights of this rapid travelling, they gained the hills of Perthshire, and were joyfully welcomed by Montrose's cousin, Patrick Grahame of Inchbrakie, at his house of Tulliebelton, between Perth and Dunkeld. Patrick Grahame the elder, a brave and trustworthy man, had been one of the guardians of Montrose's minority, and his son—afterwards called in the Highlands Black Pate—was devoted to his chief, and willingly undertook to join Sir William Rollock and Major Sibbald in scouring the country for intelligence as to the condition of the Royalists in the north.

For six days Montrose lay in hiding in Tulliebelton, passing his days alone on the mountains, and sleeping at night in the woods or in any rough shelter he could find. The messengers returned with the most discouraging tidings,



and many were the heartrending stories they had to tell of the sufferings of the Royalists. The goodwife of Harthill, near Aberdeen, had just been turned out of house and home with all her children because her son had taken part in Huntly's rising. Two days later Alexander Irvine of Kincausie, who (against his will as it was believed) had followed his young chief, the Laird of Drum, in the same unlucky expedition, had been shot dead, as he was riding quietly into Aberdeen at night, by a Covenanter who wished to gain the two thousand marks offered for the poor man's capture.\* The money was paid to the murderer out of the victim's estate, and everyone was commanded to abstain from speaking in condemnation of the deed.

These were examples of what was happening in the loyal districts of the north, and the spirit of the people seemed entirely crushed. The Gordons, upon whose assistance Montrose had confidently reckoned, were left without a leader by the desertion of their chief, and they had even fallen to some extent under the influence of Argyll. This was a heavy blow to Montrose, and it was not the only disappointment of the kind. Many of the loyally disposed nobles had been forced to choose between imprisonment and taking arms in defence of "the Estates," and among them were some of Montrose's personal friends, such as his kinsman Lord Kilpont, and David Drummond of Madertie, who afterwards married his favourite sister Beatrix. These men, who would naturally have declared for the King had there been any leader under whom they could have placed themselves, were now in arms for the Covenant.

Not a gleam of hope was to be found in the depressing reports brought by the two explorers to the solitary leader in his hiding-place; but his thoughts turned towards those mountain clans whose feudal enmity to Argyll made them willing and eager to fight against any cause which he sup-

\* "Thus," writes Spalding, "is this brave gentleman unfortunately murdered under silence of night, for greed of this gain, set out by the Estates without ground of godliness. Many were sorrowful at his death, being marvellously well-beloved both in burrow and land; he left behind him his dolorous wife and five fatherless children. . . . This innocent blood is no way punished, according to the law of God and man, but is esteemed and publicly approved as good and loyal service, in manifest contempt of our dreadful God and the King's law."

ported. They were rough and uncivilized, and were both despised and hated by their Lowland neighbours. But Montrose, though a Lowlander, understood and appreciated their many fine qualities. He knew how to appeal to their enthusiasm and love of honour, how to rouse their fiery courage, and how to touch the deep instinct of faithful affection of which they were capable. The King would appear to them as a superior sort of chieftain basely deserted by his vassals, and it would be easy to show them that they were bound in duty to follow him and to right his wrongs.

While pondering on the possible means of organizing an army in the face of the enormous difficulties that stood in the way, the tidings he had been so long waiting for reached him at last in a singular and romantic manner. Patrick Gordon of Ruthven, who received the account from Montrose himself, tells the story, and it is given here in the quaint words of the original narrator, for the sake of the light it throws upon the deeply religious spirit in which Montrose approached his great enterprise.

“As he was one day in Methven Wood, staying for the night, because there was no safe travelling by day, he became transported with sadness, grief and pity, to see his native country thus brought into miserable bondage and slavery through the turbulent and blind zeal of some preachers; and now persecuted by the unlawful and ambitious ends of some of the nobility, and so far had they already prevailed that the event was much to be feared, and by good patriots to be lamented. And therefore, in a deep grief and unwonted ravishment, he besought the Divine Majesty, with watery eyes and a sorrowful heart, that His justly kindled indignation might be appeased and His mercy extended, the cause removed; and that it might please Him to make him (Montrose) a humble instrument therein, to His Holy and Divine Majesty’s greater glory.

“While he was in this thought, lifting up his eyes, he beholds a man coming the way to St Johnston (Perth) with a fiery cross in his hand. Hastily stepping towards him, he inquired what the matter meant? The messenger told him that Coll Mac Gillespick—for so was Alexander Macdonald



called by the Highlanders—was entered in Athole with a great army of the Irish, and threatened to burn the whole country if they did not rise with him against the Covenant, and he, the messenger, was sent to advertise St Johnston that all the country might be raised to resist him.”

Montrose knew at once that these intruders must be the Earl of Antrim's promised recruits from the other side of the Channel, and the news was almost immediately confirmed by a letter from Allaster (or Alexander) Macdonald, the leader of the Scoto-Irish troops.

Macdonald, who is better known by the name of Colkitto (the left-handed or ambidexter), had landed about a month before at Ardnamurchan in Argyllshire, with barely fifteen hundred men, and a ragged train of women and children. He had taken two or three castles, and had ravaged the country without mercy, in payment of many old scores against the Campbells, but his small army was in a miserable condition and possessed hardly any arms. He found no allies and no leader, for the lieutenant-general under whom he had orders to act was not to be heard of, and was supposed to be in England. Under these circumstances Colkitto would have re-embarked his men, but English parliamentary ships had burned his little fleet, and his retreat was rendered impossible.

As soon as the tidings of this invasion reached Edinburgh, an army under Argyll's leadership was sent to the west to hem in and destroy the adventurous invaders. Colkitto, who was a man of immense personal strength and extraordinary daring, but without military talent, marched through the country burning and slaying, and losing no opportunity of injuring Argyll. He tried to raise the country in the name of the King's Lieutenant, using for this purpose the old Highland war summons—a slight cross of yew, scorched and blackened with fire—which was carried from village to village among the mountains by their fleetest messengers—

“Herald of battle, fate and fear.”

But the well-known fiery symbol was quickly adopted by the other side, and the messenger who so singularly en-

countered Montrose in the wood of Methven was carrying it from one town to another for the purpose of raising the inhabitants against the Irish invaders.

The letter which Montrose received from Colkitto was addressed to him at Carlisle, but it had been entrusted to the care of a Highland laird who lived close to Tulliebelton, and he mentioned it to Patrick Grahame, who offered to take charge of it and put it into the hands of the royal lieutenant.

Montrose was well acquainted with the impulsive character of the Highlanders and Scoto-Irish, and he decided at once upon presenting himself unexpectedly before the forlorn band of Royalists, with the idea of rousing their enthusiasm by an inspiring surprise. He accordingly answered Colkitto's letter as though he were still at Carlisle, and directed the Irish to march at once to Blair Athole, telling them to keep up their spirits, and promising that they should not be long without a general. Colkitto at once obeyed the command, and the Irish, with five hundred men who had joined them in Badenoch, took up a position in Athole, little dreaming that their commander-in-chief was within twenty miles of them.

Athole had been the scene of some of Argyll's heaviest oppressions. Many a ruined homestead bore witness to the treatment which these brave and loyal Highlanders had received from the covenanting dictator, and any opportunity of revenge was sure to be eagerly seized; but though the very name of Campbell was held in abhorrence by men, women, and children, yet the Athole clans were unwilling to ally themselves with the Irish. They looked upon these strangers with suspicion, not unmingled with contempt, and were far more inclined to attack them as enemies than to join with them as friends, even against Argyll. Even without this added danger the position of the Ulster men, who were waiting among the braes of Athole in vague expectation of a leader to whom all the Royalists would cheerfully submit, was extremely critical. Argyll was advancing with a well-appointed army to destroy them, and not only were they without a recognised commander, but they could not even



produce the Royal Commission, which alone could justify them in rising against the usurped government of the Estates.

Fortunately for them, the only help that could have availed them was close at hand. It was on one of the last days of August 1644 that Colkitto's troops, with the Badenoch Highlanders, encamped, to the number of about eighteen hundred, on one of the wild heathery moors of Athole, caught sight of two figures coming over the nearest hill to the south and walking rapidly in the direction of the little army. As they came nearer there was a sudden stir among the Highlanders. In one of the travellers they had recognised "the Graeme," who had been known to many of them from his boyhood, and as they crowded round him in almost frantic joy their wild shouts of welcome quickly convinced the astonished Irishmen that the long-promised general whom they had supposed to be hundreds of miles away—the Marquis of Montrose himself—was really there on the heath and in their midst.

He wore a Highland dress—a short coat and hose of tartan, with the plaid thrown over his shoulders. The flat blue bonnet on his head was ornamented by a small bunch of oats as a badge, a broadsword hung by his side, and he carried a Highland targe (a small round shield) on his arm. Guided by his cousin, Black Pate, he had walked that morning straight across the mountains from Tulliebelton. As he moved about among the chiefs, addressing each one with the easy courtesy of manner which was natural to him, his new followers noted with interest the promise of strength and endurance in the well-knit, active figure, the keen yet kindly look of the grey eyes, and the expression of quiet determination about the mouth. Here was a leader under whom any man might be proud to serve, and the impressionable Irishmen began from that moment to share the enthusiasm with which the royal lieutenant had been already greeted by their Highland allies.

The scruples which some of the more prudent amongst the Highlanders had felt as to rising in arms against Argyll's government were entirely removed by the publication of the King's Commission to Montrose, investing him with full

authority to put down the rebellion, and the next day the Robertsons and Stewarts of Athole, to the number of eight hundred, joined him in battle array. With this addition the royal forces mustered about two thousand five hundred strong. They were, it is true, wretchedly armed and equipped, and cavalry was altogether wanting; but, relying on the guidance of God and the righteousness of his cause, Montrose was ready and eager to try his strength against the Covenanters.

Not far from the Castle of Blair, just outside the northern extremity of the wooded Pass of Killiecrankie, stood the old house of Lude. The young Laird of Lude—a mere child—was a nephew of Patrick Grahame's, and in this house Montrose usually took up his quarters when he came to the neighbourhood of Athole. On this occasion he slept there only one night, and next morning, with all the ceremony at his command, he raised the royal standard on a green knoll close at hand, which overlooked the wide strath of Athole, and the deep rocky glens of the Tilt and the Fender. Then, after a few inspiriting words, he led them straight over hill and valley by Loch Tummel towards Perth, encouraging his little army with the prospect of surprising their enemies before they could have time to combine with Argyll's slowly advancing forces.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### TIPPERMUIR

"Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',  
Let him on wi' me."

BURNS.

MONTROSE did not begin his campaign in Scotland without **Sept. 1644** giving the Covenanters fair notice. It was characteristic of him that he was always as ready to defend with his pen the truth and justice of the cause he ardently believed in, as he was willing to fight for it with his sword, and at this crisis his first act was to publish a proclamation setting forth the necessity of his undertaking, as well as justifying the King's motives and his own. In this paper he declared that he took up arms only "for the defence and maintenance, according to his vow in the National Oath and Covenant, of the true Protestant religion, His Majesty's just and sacred authority, the fundamental laws and privileges of Parliament, the peace and freedom of the oppressed and thrall'd subject." Recognising the fact that his aims had been and still were "mistaken" by many of his countrymen, he solemnly assured them that if he had not felt confident of the King's sincere and fixed resolve to abide by his promises to the Scottish people, and not in any case to recall the large concessions he had made to his Parliament, he, Montrose, would never have embarked in this service, and he further declared that if even now he saw the "least appearance of His Majesty's change from those resolutions" he would no longer continue in that service.

At the same time he wrote a courteous letter to Argyll. Putting aside all personal enmity, Montrose entreated him to

return to his allegiance, and after reminding him of the "good King's" tenderness and willingness to forgive, he concluded his letter with these words: "But if you shall still continue obstinate, I call God to witness that, through your own stubbornness, I shall be compelled to endeavour to reduce you by force. So I rest your friend if you please. —MONTROSE."

On the first alarm of Macdonald's landing the rulers at Edinburgh had hurried on their preparations for crushing the royalist movement. North of the Grampians the Earls of Seaforth and Sutherland were gathering in arms the clans under their influence. Lord Burleigh held Aberdeen with a strong force; Argyll with his warlike Highlanders was approaching from the west; while Elcho and Tullibardine, with close upon seven thousand well-equipped troops, were stationed at Perth. On all sides the Royalists were hemmed in by armies superior in number to themselves, and very little hesitation on the part of their commander would have given their foes time to converge to one centre and overpower them by sheer force of numbers. But Montrose was not the man to hesitate. Without the delay of a single hour, he marched his men, in their first glow of loyal enthusiasm, straight upon Perth, firmly resolved, by rapidity of movement, to prevent the Covenanters from combining in overwhelming numbers to destroy him.

On their first day's march the Royalists passed the Castle of Weem (Castle Menzies), the property of a chieftain who was on good terms with Argyll. The bearer of a friendly message from Montrose was maltreated by the inhabitants, who also attacked the rear of his forces. To show that they were not to be thus treated with impunity, he allowed his men to plunder the lands of the unfriendly clan, and to burn down some of their cottages; but such harsh measures were used by him only on rare occasions and for strong reasons.

That night Montrose crossed the Tay with part of the army, and the rest followed in the morning. Patrick Grahame, being sent forward to reconnoitre, soon returned with intelligence that Lord Kilpont, the eldest son of Montrose's cousin, the Earl of Menteith, was at the head of about



five hundred bowmen, drawn up on the hill of Buchanty as if to oppose the Royalists. With Kilpont were the Master of Madertie and Sir John Drummond, son of the Earl of Perth. These loyal gentlemen, in obedience to an order of the Estates, had put themselves at the head of their tenants and retainers to resist the Irish intruders, who were looked upon by all parties as mere adventurers and public enemies.

No sooner, however, did they learn that Montrose himself was in command of the approaching force than they sent several of their officers to ask for information as to his intentions. Little explanation was needed, and when the King's lieutenant-general entreated them, as loyal subjects and men of honour, not to let slip this opportunity of being the first to come to the assistance of the tottering crown, Lord Kilpont and Sir John Drummond joined him at once with all their followers.

Lord Kilpont was a most welcome addition to the little band of Royalists, for this young nobleman was not only a brave and faithful adherent of the King, but a man of highly cultivated mind, whose kindred tastes and kindly disposition endeared him greatly to his commander and kinsman. He and his friends informed Montrose that the Covenanters were gathered together in force near Perth, ready to attack him as soon as he should come down from Athole. Montrose already knew that Argyll was advancing from the west, and to avoid being hemmed in between the two armies he hastened to encounter the Covenanters posted at Perth.

That night his men rested only a few hours, and at break of day on the first of September they were again on their march. They were still three miles from Perth when they came in sight of the covenanting army drawn up in an orderly manner in the wide valley of Tippermuir. These troops were commanded by Lord Elcho, who was no soldier, but under him were several experienced officers, Sir James Scott of Rossie being the most distinguished.

Lord Elcho and his subalterns could hardly be blamed if they looked with some contempt upon the force opposed to their own well-armed troops, numbering six thousand foot and seven hundred horse, and provided with nine pieces of

cannon. The Royalists counted under three thousand men. They possessed neither cavalry nor artillery, and they had very few weapons of any kind. Baillie speaks of them as "a pack of naked runagates, not three horses among them, few either swords or muskets"; and another covenanting minister describes them as "naked, weaponless, ammunitionless, cannonless men." These exaggerated descriptions, however, applied chiefly to the Irish, who formed about half the royalist force. As a matter of fact they did possess a few muskets.

It happened to be a Sunday, and the ministers in attendance vigorously extolled the cause of the Solemn League and Covenant, and one of them did not hesitate to promise his hearers, in the name of God, an easy and bloodless victory.

It was still early in the day when Lord Elcho drew out his men in order of battle, and as the open ground was advantageous for cavalry movements, he placed a strong troop of horse in each wing, expecting that by this disposition of his cavalry he would be able easily to surround the small force opposed to him. But Montrose at once divined his plan, and to prevent the enemy from attacking him in front, flank and rear at once, he stretched his own front to its utmost extent, drawing out his men in one long thin line only three deep. He ordered the men in the front row to rest on one knee; those in the second to stoop, leaning over the first row; and the last rank, in which he placed the tallest men, to stand erect. Reminding those who possessed muskets that they had only one round of ammunition, he strictly commanded them not to fire a single shot till they came to close quarters with the enemy, and he raised their spirits by his confident assurance that the Covenanters would never stand their charge.

The Irish were placed in the centre under Colkitto; Lord Kilpont commanded the left flank; and Montrose himself, who went on foot with his target and pike, took charge of the right wing, which was opposed to the troops led by Sir James Scott, the best officer among the Covenanters. Thus fully prepared for action, Montrose sent young Drummond of Madertie with a flag of truce to Lord Elcho. Madertie ex-



plained that his general was acting under the Royal Commission, and was most earnestly desirous to avoid bloodshed, requiring only that all Scottish subjects should return to their allegiance. The Covenanters, disregarding the flag of truce, sent the Master of Madertie a prisoner to Perth, telling him that they would cut off his head as soon as they had won the victory.

Enraged by this violation of the laws of war, the Highlanders were eager to be led to immediate battle, but Montrose held them back. It was not till after a short preliminary skirmish between a few of the troops of both armies that he took advantage of a slight confusion in the enemy's line and led forward his whole array to the attack. With a great shout the wild Highlanders and wilder Irish rushed upon the foe, nor was their onset checked by the discharge of the cannon, which did no execution, as the Royalists had hardly come within range. The irresistible impetus of the attack quickly routed the Lowland cavalry, and the Irish, rushing after the fleeing horsemen, pursued them with showers of the sharp stones with which the plain was strewn.

The struggle seemed likely to prove more obstinate on the right wing, where Sir James Scott contended with Montrose for the advantage of the rising ground; but the agile Highlanders won the hill and came down upon their enemies with so fierce a shock that the Covenanters fairly turned and fled.

"Although," says one of the royalist officers who was present, "the battle continued for some space we lost not a man on our side, yet still advanced, the enemy being three or four to one. However, God gave us the day, the enemy retreating with their backs towards us, that men might have walked upon the dead corps to the town, being two long miles from where the battle was pitched. . . . All their cannon, arms, munition, colours, drums, tents, baggage; in a word, none of themselves nor baggage escaped our hands but their horse, and such of their foot as were taken prisoner within the city." \*

Montrose's easy victory over a force so far superior in

\* *Ormonde Papers*, quoted by Napier.

numbers to his own, has been attributed by more than one writer to the worthlessness of the troops opposed to him, and to the warlike ardour of the Highlanders; but when it is remembered that only a few years earlier Montrose, with an inferior force of these same Lowlanders, had easily overcome the Highland army under Aboyne, it may reasonably be inferred that the success in both cases was owing rather to the genius of the general in command than to the quality of the troops engaged.

After this decisive victory Perth surrendered at the first summons, and was very mercifully treated. Outside the walls the carnage had been great, though Montrose had done what he could to check the slaughter by refusing to allow the captured cannon to be turned against the fugitives. Within the vanquished city no cruelty or outrage was perpetrated. The care taken by Montrose to protect the inhabitants from insult and injury was clearly shown in the statement upon oath of the sheriff's clerk, when he and several of the citizens were examined by the Committee of Estates as to the events that took place in the town after the battle. Everyone who was found to have held any communication with the excommunicated Commander was severely taken to task, and the sheriff's clerk was blamed because he had written under Montrose's orders "ane general protection for the inhabitants of the town of Perth and lands about the same."\*

The only punishment inflicted on the citizens, many of whom had borne arms in the battle, was a fine of fifty pounds paid straight to Colkitto, and the requirement of a large quantity of cloth for the soldiers, who, if we may believe the accounts of their enemies, seem to have been sadly in want of decent clothing.

One of the first things Montrose did after entering the city was to send for his two boys, Lord Grahame and Lord James, and on the Tuesday morning they arrived in care of Sir John Grahame of Braco, and were taken straight to their father's quarters in the house of a certain Margaret Donaldson. Mr William Forrett, Montrose's faithful old tutor, was there to take charge of them, having arrived the night before.

\* "Depositions before the Committee of Estates," *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 149.



In the depositions afterwards taken by the Covenanters, and already referred to, frequent mention is made of a gallery in Margaret Donaldson's house, where the Marquis transacted much business, and where, in company with his boys and the old tutor, he also entertained his friends and officers. Among his guests was a Mr George Haliburton, one of the ministers of Perth, who, being asked by his host to say grace at dinner, complied with the request, for which offence he was afterwards severely taken to task.

His own presbytery "sharply censured" him for "conversing with Montrose during his being in Perth, also for eating and drinking with him, and saying of grace at his dinner, he being an excommunicated person." Mr George ingenuously confessed his fault and was forgiven, but a Commission of the Kirk at Edinburgh took the matter up, and finding him guilty upon his own confession, deposed him from the ministry. Fortunately for him he had an influential cousin who was a great covenanting dame. This lady came over the Firth, and vowed to Lord Balmerino "with many oaths," that unless he got her cousin reinstated, he should never more enjoy the favour of the Lordship of Cowper. Accordingly Mr Haliburton was reinstated.

Another covenanting minister, Mr Alexander Balneaves, was reprimanded for having given Montrose a cup of cold water which he had asked for immediately after the battle. But Mr Balneaves, instead of making a humble confession, answered his examiners roughly, that "however they might *now* find fault with them who had shown any civility to the Marquis, yet there was none of them who, about the time of the battle, durst have refused to kiss—in the meanest manner—the Marquis if he had commanded them so to do." \*

Montrose remained three days in Perth, on the chance that some of those gentlemen who had frequently boasted of their attachment to the King might join him in arms; but one victory, however startling and unexpected, was not enough to encourage them to risk life and property for the cause which they held to be the cause of truth and honour.

\* *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 312. Extracts from the Registry of the Presbytery of Perth.

The Earl of Kinnoul, whose family was specially faithful to Montrose, was the only exception, and the little help he could give was of small value compared with the loss the army sustained through the withdrawal of most of the Highlanders of Athole. In accordance with their usual practice they retired to their homes, to place in safety the spoils they had won, and their desertion so weakened Montrose that he could not at once face Argyll, who was approaching with a powerful army. He therefore left the city, and again crossing the Tay, encamped in the open fields near Coupar-Angus.

In the early dawn of the following morning the officers were startled by an extraordinary uproar in the camp, and Montrose, supposing that the tumult was the result of some quarrel between the Irish and the Highlanders, threw himself into the thickest of the throng, with the intention of restoring order. But what were his grief and horror when he beheld his friend and cousin, the young Lord Kilpont, lying stabbed to the heart, dead upon the ground! Bending over the lifeless body, he embraced it many times in a transport of grief, for of all those who had joined him in his bold attempt to restore the royal authority in Scotland none was so dear to him as this most promising scion of the house of Menteith.

All that could be ascertained was that the assassin was James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, an intimate friend of the unfortunate heir of Menteith, who had slept that night in the same bed with Stewart. The murderer, in effecting his escape, had killed two sentinels, and as he was accompanied in his flight by his son and several friends, it looked as if the crime might have been premeditated. The cause of the murder was a mystery, and many conjectures about it were current in the camp. Some said that Stewart had proposed to the young lord the assassination of Montrose, and that upon his horrified rejection of the suggestion Stewart had stabbed him to the heart. Others supposed that he had committed the deed in order to ingratiate himself with the Covenanters, perhaps to procure a pardon for having fought against them; and it must be admitted that though this was only a royalist surmise, Ardvoirlich's subsequent conduct gave a colour of probability to the report. He went straight to Argyll, who



received him and his friends with open arms and procured him something more than a pardon from the Committee of Estates.

In the "ratification of James Stewart's pardon for killing of the Lord Kilpont" it is stated "that the said James, heartily repenting of his error in joining with the said rebels, resolved with his said friends to forsake their wicked company, and imparted this resolution to the late Lord Kilpont. But he, out of his malignant dispositions, opposed the same, and fell in struggling with the said James, who, for his own relief, was forced to kill him at the Kirk of Collace, with two Irish rebels who resisted his escape, and so removed happily with his son and friends, and came straight to the Marquis of Argyll and offered their services to their country." The Committee of Estates found that "the said James Stewart did good service to the kingdom in killing the said Lord Kilpont and two Irish rebels foresaid, and approved of what he did therein."

Six days after Argyll had taken Ardvoirlich under his protection he issued a printed proclamation, in which a heavy price was offered for Montrose's head. Though not a single Covenanter had been slain by the Royalists excepting in fair fight and pursuit after battle, and though the captured city of Perth had been carefully protected from injury, Montrose was accused of murder and unheard-of cruelties, treachery and Popery being thrown in to make the list blacker. The sum of twenty thousand pounds Scots was offered "in present and ready payment" to anyone who should "take and apprehend the said Earl of Montrose alive before the Parliament," or who should "exhibit his head" to them or their Committee. As a further inducement to assassinate the royalist general, a free pardon was offered not only for any bygone participation "in this rebellion," but for all and any "other crimes formerly committed by them." The leaders of the Covenant hoped to bribe some scoundrel to purchase a free pardon for one crime by committing another.

The veil of legal form under which this proposal to assassinate Montrose was set forth seems to have hidden its real character from posterity. But let the reader imagine for

a moment that King Charles had issued a similar proclamation against Essex, Cromwell or Argyll. What words would then have been strong enough to stigmatize the iniquity of such an appeal to the worst motives and passions of human nature?



## CHAPTER XIX

### BATTLE OF ABERDEEN AND FIGHTING AT FYVIE

“For life ! for life ! their flight they ply—  
And shriek and shout and battle cry,  
And plaids and bonnets waving high,  
And broadswords flashing to the sky  
Are maddening in their rear.”

*Lady of the Lake.*

WITH forces much diminished by the temporary defection of **Sept. 1644** the Highlanders, Montrose marched eastward to Dundee, and finding it well garrisoned, he decided not to risk a siege, and passed on in the direction of the Esk to that part of Angus where his own possessions principally lay. Here he hoped to be joined by some of his old friends and neighbours in the county, but with one notable exception all these families disappointed him, though they were in their hearts far from friendly to the usurping Government at Edinburgh. This exception was the gallant old Earl of Airlie, the father of Montrose's faithful friend, Lord Ogilvie, who was at this time pining in a covenanting prison. Ogilvie's two brothers, Sir Thomas and Sir David, accompanied their father, and all remained Montrose's faithful adherents through every change of fortune. A few days later the Royalists gained another valuable ally in Nathaniel Gordon, a brave but exceedingly reckless Cavalier, who had quarrelled with his chief, the Marquis of Huntly, and now joined Montrose with thirty valiant and well-appointed horsemen.

While still in the neighbourhood of Dundee, the royal lieutenant had received intelligence that a large covenanting force was assembled at Aberdeen, and that their commander, Lord Burleigh, was doing all he could to suppress the King's friends in the north. Montrose, who still hoped to win the Gordons to his side, immediately decided to confront this

army, though he knew it to be greatly superior to his own in numbers, and he reached the banks of the Dee on the 11th of September.

The bridge which, in his enthusiasm for the threatened liberties of kirk and country, he had stormed five years before was closely watched day and night by a guard from Aberdeen. To defeat this precaution he crossed some miles higher up the river not far from the Mills of Drum, and late in the evening summoned the Castle of Crathes, belonging to Sir Robert Burnet of Leys, who surrendered without resistance. Leys, though a strong Covenanter, entertained Montrose that night in a friendly manner, and even offered him a sum of five thousand marks, which—as Spalding records—“he nobly refused.” Throughout his campaigns Montrose was never known to despoil castle, town or country, unless compelled to do so by the stern necessities of war, and on this occasion he contented himself with carrying off from Crathes a few horses and some arms. On the 12th he encamped at the “two-mile Cross,” and next morning, Friday, the 13th of September, he sent a drummer with a flag of truce and a commissioner with a letter written in his own hand, addressed to the magistrate. The letter (which is still preserved in the Town House of Aberdeen) ran as follows:

“LOVING FRIENDS,—Being here for the maintenance of Religion and Liberty, and His Majesty’s just authority and service, these are, in His Majesty’s name, to require you that immediately upon sight thereof you render and give up your town in the behalf of His Majesty; otherwise that all old persons, women and children, do come out and retire themselves, and that those who stay expect no quarter.—I am, as you deserve,  
“MONTROSE.”

The summons was refused, but the humane precaution suggested by Montrose was not taken, and the covenanting army immediately began to march out of the town, and to take up a strong position on the side of the hill, where some scattered houses and gardens formed a convenient shelter. They were already drawn up in order of battle when Montrose’s flag of truce left the town, and as the royalist messengers passed in front of the ranks some men in the Fife regiment fired upon them. The drummer was killed, and this second outrage of the acknowledged laws



of war greatly roused the indignation of Montrose and of the soldiers.

The royalist forces were not only far inferior in number to their opponents, they were also greatly overmatched in cavalry. But most of the covenanting officers were weak and incapable, while Montrose knew how to turn whatever means he had at his disposal to the best advantage. Dividing his fifty horsemen into two bodies, he placed one troop on each wing, and in a manner anticipating the tactics of modern mounted rifles, he strengthened them by interspersing them with some picked musketeers and archers, whose speed of foot enabled them to keep up with the horse.

The battle lasted for more than four hours and was obstinately contested. Twice the overwhelming superiority of the covenanting cavalry threatened the Royalists with defeat, and nothing but the genius of their commander could have saved them from disaster. By the use which he made of his own handful of cavalry, bringing it to bear just on the critical point at each critical moment, Montrose repelled the enemy's attacks upon both his wings, and seeing his opponents about to rally for another effort, he rode up to his main body of foot, and ended a short and inspiring address by the order to fall instantly upon the rebels with swords and muskets and to drive them from the field.

Encouraged by the spirit and confidence of their commander, the Irish charged with irresistible impetuosity, and routed the army of the Covenant. The royal troops behaved with great gallantry throughout the battle; one Irishman, who had his leg shot off by a cannon ball, with cool unconcern encouraged his comrades to dash on and leave him, exclaiming that he was certain the Marquis would make him a trooper since he was disabled for foot service. The brave fellow recovered from his wound and received the desired promotion.\* It was most unfortunate for Aberdeen that the battle was fought almost under the walls of the city, and that

\* Dr Gardiner, in the second volume of his *Great Civil War*, gives a spirited and interesting account of this battle, based upon Patrick Gordon's account, which does not quite agree with that given by Wishart. Gardiner lays too much stress upon the advantage to Montrose of possessing trained troops in the 1500 Irish-

the beaten citizens, instead of directing their flight to the open country, where they might have dispersed in different directions, fled in panic-stricken terror straight into the town. Inflamed with the fury of the hard-fought field, their victorious foes pursued them through the narrow and winding streets, and into the many-storied houses, where they vainly sought for refuge, and in the slaughter that ensued, unarmed men, and even women, were not always spared, for the Provost had paid no heed to Montrose's humane warning to remove the old men, women and children to a place of safety.

The Marquis has been severely blamed for the cruelties and excesses of which some of the Irish troops were guilty in the captured city, but even Spalding's relation clearly shows that almost all the slaughter must have taken place in the battle and subsequent flight. So far from being to his discredit, the comparative immunity of the town from the worst consequences provoked by the outrage on his flag of truce redounds to his credit in the highest degree. It would be hard to find in military history an instance of a commander more uniformly merciful under continual provocation by wanton disregard of the well-known laws of war.

Spalding gives one hundred and eighteen as the number of townsmen who were killed, "ninety-eight of whom had been hauled out sore against their wills to fight." As the battle can hardly have begun before mid-day, and lasted four hours, it must have been getting late on the Friday afternoon when the victorious Irish poured into the town. The main body of the army remained in "unbroken order" outside the walls,\* and as Montrose himself returned to his camp, two miles off, the same evening, it is natural to suppose that he took with him all the troops who could be collected, and that the few who remained behind under cover of the darkness to pillage, belonged to that disorderly and ill-disposed section which is rarely absent even in a well-disciplined army.

men under Colkitto. But these same Irish troops had landed in Scotland a short time before, a ragged and undisciplined crew, and had only been a fortnight under Montrose's orders. No doubt they were good raw material, but their efficiency lay in the way in which they were handled.

\* Spalding.



When Montrose returned next morning to Aberdeen he gave orders to the army to march forthwith to Kintore, a village ten miles distant, and took up his own quarters in Skipper Anderson's house. He was accompanied by the Earl of Airlie and his two sons, by Sir William Drummond, and by several other gentlemen of unblemished fame, men who were no more likely than Montrose himself to countenance wanton cruelty or oppression. They had much business on their hands in setting at liberty the royalist prisoners confined in the Tolbooth, in publishing the King's letters patent, and in issuing the royal proclamation from the Cross.

On the morning of Monday, the 16th, before he left Aberdeen to rejoin the army, Montrose gave orders to both the old and new towns that the dead should at once be buried, and finding that some of the "savage Irishes," as Spalding calls them, were still prowling about, frightening and ill-treating the citizens, the runagates were charged "by tuck of drum under pain of death," to remove at once from the town and follow the camp. Even following Spalding's account, written under the influence of the vivid impression made upon the writer by his only personal experience of the horrors of war, Montrose appears to have taken all possible precautions to lessen the miseries of the captured city.\* He made no stay in Kintore, but marched straight to Inverurie, where he was nearer the shelter of the mountains, taking with him some prisoners, the most important of whom were Sir William Forbes of Craigievar, and John Forbes of Largie.

Two days later Argyll entered Aberdeen with his well-equipped army, and added to the distress of the unhappy townspeople by making large requisitions for the entertainment of his troops. Much surprise was excited in Scotland by the slowness of Argyll's movements. The Royalists, whom for several weeks he had been pursuing, or rather following at a very respectful distance, were now within a few

\* "A True Relation" (Royalist), printed in 1644, and preserved in the Bodleian at Oxford, states that "Montrose hasted into the town, to save it from being plundered, whereby it had little loss save by those who were killed in the battle." See *Deeds of Montrose*, liii.

miles of him, and they were so very inferior in number to the force under his command, that if he could strike before the Highlanders returned to the standard their extinction appeared certain.

Montrose was fully aware of his precarious position. The two brilliant battles he had won showed what a soldier of genius might effect by the daring and dexterous management of materials which would have been hopelessly ineffective in other hands, but no one knew better than he that such snatched successes could never bring about the peaceful end which was his aim and object. The cause was not to be won in the Highlands, and Lowland warfare was impossible, even for Montrose, without a larger and more permanent force than the small body of irregular infantry with which he had hitherto achieved success. Since the victories of Gustavus Adolphus all the great soldiers of that day had looked to cavalry as the chief arm by which decisive triumphs were to be won, and the royal lieutenant thought longingly of the Gordon cavalry, so close at hand and yet so tantalizingly beyond his reach, because, in spite of their loyal inclinations, the brave clansmen could not act in open opposition to their jealous chief.

Huntly's obstinate enmity to Montrose may have been partly due to the angry recollection he is said to have cherished of Montrose's involuntary and reluctant co-operation in that journey to Edinburgh which had ended in Huntly's imprisonment six years earlier; but there can be no doubt that he also jealously resented his official subordination to a man till recently his inferior in rank and following, and withal young enough to be his son.

Seeing little immediate prospect of help from the Gordons, Montrose, when he left Aberdeen, had sent Sir William Rollock to Oxford to inform the King of his successes, and to entreat at the same time for the reinforcements which were sorely needed in order to carry out the great enterprise so brilliantly begun. Having despatched Rollock on his perilous journey, Montrose lost no time in providing for the safety of his brave followers by leading them into the wild and mountainous district of Badenoch, where his want of cavalry would be



no disadvantage, and whither the enemy's horse could not follow him without great difficulty. In these wilds a greater danger than Argyll's overwhelming forces or any other they had yet encountered threatened the Royalists. Montrose fell dangerously ill. It was even reported that he was dead, and some of the covenanting ministers triumphantly announced that the Lord of Hosts had himself slain their terrible enemy. But their rejoicing was premature. He rapidly recovered, and by the 4th of October was able to move into Athole. There he remained for a short time, resting in the old Castle of Blair, while Colkitto set off on a recruiting expedition among the Western Highlands.

Argyll was all this time following slowly and cautiously in the track of the Royalists, burning and destroying the country wherever it was reported that the inhabitants had assisted Montrose. The covenanting forces of over four thousand well-armed men included more than a thousand of Leven's best troops. That veteran, who was besieging Newcastle with every prospect of success, sent this valuable reinforcement to Argyll, believing that his well-trained horse and foot would soon return to him, having accomplished the easy task of crushing a foe so ill provided with most of the material aids for carrying on war.

The royal lieutenant had indeed at this time a mere handful of followers, for his Highlanders were still absent, and some of the Irish had gone westward with Colkitto. He could not attack Argyll with any chance of success, and yet if his wild and undisciplined troops were allowed to remain idle and inactive they were certain to get into mischief. Montrose, therefore, having by this time entirely recovered his usual vigorous health, began a series of rapid marches, which Baillie describes as "that strange coursing" thrice round about from the Spey to Athole. Argyll lumbered heavily after the Royalists, usually seven or eight days' march behind, and never approaching near enough to his active foe for a skirmish. But he was not by any means the only Covenanter who had a wholesome dread of "this mighty Montrose."\* Just at this time an order was published by the

\* Spalding, October 1644.

authorities in Aberdeen, commanding the citizens, under heavy penalties, to raise new levies of horse and foot to resist the Irish. Every pulpit in the neighbourhood was employed to publish this decree, but the fear of Montrose was upon the people, and "they would not rise." Clerical exhortations and military commands, published by tuck of drum, were alike in vain. "Never a townsman would stir." \*

The local rulers of Aberdeen were obliged to obtain troops from the south to defend their town against another descent of Montrose, and with these they guarded the Bridge of Dee, where for some weeks the covenanting soldiers were quartered, living idly and oppressing the country people. It was all labour lost, for on the 17th October the dreaded enemy crossed the Dee a few miles higher up, not far from Drum, and marched on, burning some of the lands belonging to well-known Covenanters, "which," says Spalding, "he had not done before in this country." But though Montrose sanctioned some amount of retaliation in the destruction of the enemy's property, the presence of a woman was always a check upon the severe usages of war. The estate of Monymusk was spared upon fair conditions in the absence of its covenanting laird, and the royal lieutenant courteously accepted the proffered hospitality of the grateful lady of the house.

By the 20th of October Argyll was so far behind that the small band of Royalists could safely take some much-needed rest, and Montrose established himself at Strathbogie, the Marquis of Huntly's despoiled and ruined home. Here he waited for a week, hoping to induce some of the Gordons to follow his standard, and every second or third night he led out parties of light foot, and scoured the country for ten miles round, attacking any of the enemy they happened to meet. The Royalists never failed to come off victorious in these skirmishes, and gained such confidence in their leader that they were ready to face any odds under his command. Perhaps the fact that Montrose himself acted as their leader accounts for the absence of all trace in the contemporary chronicles of any robbery or violence in the course of these excursions.

\* Spalding, October 1644.



Montrose remained at Strathbogie till near the end of the month, when, hearing that Argyll was again advancing, he took possession of Fyvie Castle, and encamped in the wood by which it was surrounded. This fine old castle, which stands in unimpaired magnificence, belonged to the Earl of Dunfermline, and the large and decorative additions it had received in the early years of the seventeenth century, while they had increased its beauty and convenience as a dwelling-place, had greatly diminished its strength. But Montrose did not attempt to make use of it as a fortress. The wood which he chose as his camping-ground covers one side of a fairly steep hill close to the castle, and facing a wide flat which was at that time a mere boggy morass, the best possible defence against a charge of cavalry.

In spite, however, of his wise choice of a position the royal lieutenant was, on this occasion, very nearly surprised by the enemy. Trusting to the reports of his scouts, he had believed that Argyll and Lothian had not yet crossed the Grampians, whereas the covenanting army was already within two miles of him. As the Royalists were not only outnumbered by more than two to one, but were almost without ammunition, and possessed only fifty horse, it would have been madness to venture an attack, and Argyll might well think that his cautious strategy had succeeded, and that his troublesome foe was at last safely trapped. But though taken by surprise Montrose was not disconcerted. Drawing up his men to the best advantage under shelter of the trees, he turned some conveniently placed ditches and stone walls into defences for his scanty force. Before, however, he had been able to complete the disposition of his troops the enemy attacked him, and at that very moment a small body of the Gordons, who had been persuaded to join the royal standard at Strathbogie, deserted openly in the sight of both armies.

Disconcerted by this treachery, the Irish allowed the Covenanters to gain the hill and even carry some of the trenches. All seemed lost, but Montrose, with a calm self-possession that hid from his followers the overwhelming peril of the moment, ordered a young Irish officer named O'Kyan, on whose ready daring he knew he could rely, to take the men

that were nearest and "drive those fellows out of the ditches that they might be no more troubled with them."

The choice of O'Kyan for this dangerous task was justified by the event. He not only drove off a greatly superior force of the enemy, but brought back the welcome prize of some bags of powder, which the Covenanters in their hurried flight had abandoned. "Have they left us no ball?" exclaimed one of the Irishmen when they beheld the powder. "Well! next time we must get some bullets from the niggardly fellows!"

In this first day's fighting at Fyvie, Montrose again strengthened his too scanty cavalry with musketeers, and in this way he successfully repelled the charge of Lord Lothian's horse. Carried away by their momentary success, the excited Royalists were eager to charge the enemy's whole line, but Montrose, while he praised their gallant spirit, entreated them to be mindful of their duty and to wait for the word of command. A large part of his astonishing success in arms must be ascribed to the extraordinary personal influence which enabled him to restrain the impetuous courage of his wild and excitable soldiery when a rash movement would have converted victory into ruin.

That day's defence was so successful that Argyll drew off in the evening, and put the River Ythan between himself and his venturesome opponent; but discovering that the Royalists were extremely short of powder and ball, he returned next day to the attack. In the skirmishing that ensued the Covenanters lost one of their best officers, a brother of Earl Marischal, and they found their active enemy better supplied with ammunition than they had expected, for Montrose had employed the intervals in melting every pewter vessel that could be found in or about the castle into bullets. After several days of this irregular fighting, Argyll, seeing that he made no impression on the position, moved his camp two miles further off, and in the night Montrose, under cover of darkness, quietly withdrew his troops and baggage from the dangerous post which for four days they had so gallantly maintained. He moved in the direction of the mountains and entrenched himself at Strathbogie, where he hoped soon to



be joined by Colkitto and his Highlanders. The country people, and indeed all Scotland, were greatly astonished by the failure of Argyll to destroy so small a force, and the escape of the Royalists from their perilous position at Fyvie was looked upon as a perfect marvel.

Argyll, well aware of the general opinion and expectation, resolved upon one more attempt, and the following day he appeared in full strength at Strathbogie, apparently intent on forcing a battle, but his first attack being vigorously repulsed, he proposed and obtained a cessation of arms and a conference. Upon this he began at once to tamper with the royalist officers, tempting them to desert, and offering a reward to anyone who would bring him Montrose's head.

Knowing that in this kind of warfare his enemy was without a rival, Montrose called a council of war, and frankly laid before his officers the dangers to which they were exposed. They readily agreed to be guided by his judgment, and he resolved at once to place men and officers out of the reach of his adversary's wiles by a rapid march into the wildest part of Badenoch. To lighten the march the heavy baggage had already been sent on, and everything was ready for a sudden move, when it was discovered that Forbes of Craigievar, one of the prisoners at Aberdeen, had broken his parole and escaped to the enemy, accompanied by Major Sibbald, who had been entrusted with some important secrets.

Craigievar's dishonourable conduct was severely commented on, because Montrose had treated him with constant kindness, and had allowed him to return to his friends upon his "bare parole," to try for an exchange with one of the royalist prisoners. He and his companion, Forbes of Largie, to whom the same liberty had been given, had returned without accomplishing their object, and the royal lieutenant had continued to treat them with unvarying kindness. Upon being told of the flight of Craigievar, Montrose went straight to Forbes of Largie and asked him whether he also was going to steal away. "I will die first," said Largie. "Then, sir," replied Montrose, "I give you free liberty to go, upon your parole to return when I send for you,

and not otherwise." The gentleman thanked him heartily, and so, with fair play, recovered his liberty.\*

The treachery with which Montrose's frankness was often met had wonderfully little effect in making him distrustful or suspicious, but the desertion of Craigievar and Sibbald was a great blow to him, as he feared that the enemy would be put in possession of his intended plan of operations. He therefore recalled the baggage and remained four days longer at Strathbogie in the hope of inducing the Covenanters to doubt the information they had received from the deserters. At the end of that time he secretly marched off his troops in the night, covering the retreat of the infantry with his small body of horse. All the camp fires being lighted as usual, the departure of the Royalists was not discovered till the next morning, by which time they had reached Balveny and were safe from the pursuit of cavalry.

It was now near the middle of November. The mountains were white with snow, and the bitter cold and darkness of the Highland winter was imminent. Many of Montrose's officers, including the Earl of Kinnoul, Sir John Drummond and other Lowland gentlemen, begged to be dismissed. They professed great unwillingness to leave their general even for a time, but some pretended ill-health, and others declared themselves unable to endure the fatigue and exposure of a winter campaign in such bleak unsheltered regions. Probably there was some truth in these excuses, but Montrose saw in them the effects of Argyll's secret persuasions and promises. For himself he shrank from no hardships, and was always ready to fare in every way like his meanest soldiers.

It was therefore with some inward scorn that he granted leave of absence to all who asked for it, and if he suspected that some few of them loved their own ease and safety too well to encounter again the toil and difficulty of Highland war, the event proved that he had judged correctly. All of them obtained Argyll's pass, without which they would only have exchanged the snows of Badenoch for the gloom of a Lowland prison. As the proportion of officers to men had

\* Spalding.



not been very large, the loss of these Lowland gentlemen considerably weakened the royalist force, and worse still, it disheartened others who might have joined the standard.

The old Earl of Airlie and his two brave sons refused to leave their commander, and faithful Master William Forrett was willing to brave frost and snow that he might attend upon Lord Grahame, now a fine active boy of fourteen, who had accompanied his father ever since the battle of Tippermuir. Lord James, who was two years younger, had been sent to school in the town of Montrose in charge of a tutor.

## CHAPTER XX

### INVERLOCHY

“ Heard ye not ! Heard ye not how that whirlwind the Gael,  
Through Lochaber swept down from Loch Ness to Loch Eil—  
And the Campbells to meet them in battle array  
Like the billow came on—and were broke like its spray !  
Long, long shall our war-song exult in that day.”

IAN LOM MACDONELL'S "Gaelic Song on Inverlochy."  
*Translated by James Robertson of Strowan.*

1644 MONTROSE'S successes, and the apparent impossibility of extinguishing him and his handful of troops, threw the leading Covenanters into a frenzy of alarm and indignation. A few months earlier they had been supreme in Scotland. Whilst professing all the time to be the King's loyal subjects, they had defied his authority with impunity. They had despatched their armies to the assistance of his enemies in England, they had fined, imprisoned, or beheaded as traitors those who ventured to obey or serve him, and they had carried fire and sword through every district that had shown itself disinclined to comply with their demands.

Now all was changed. Montrose had suddenly appeared in the wildest part of Scotland, a solitary man—without arms or followers. A few scattered bands of Highlanders and Irish, ill-equipped and undisciplined, had been transformed by his genius into an effective army, and the security of the Covenanters was gone. The sufferings they had inflicted upon others they had now—though only in a modified degree—to endure themselves, and they could not find words to denounce the atrocity of those acts of warfare which, when exercised by themselves against the loyalists, they had considered not merely justifiable but pious and praiseworthy. When their troops were slain in the heat of conflict they were



said to be "cruelly murdered on the field." \* But if a royalist was stabbed or shot down, in a moment of unsuspecting security, by a covenanting neighbour or acquaintance, the deed was declared to be righteous and "good service to the public." †

The ministers of the Kirk were especially violent, and did not hesitate to proclaim from their pulpits that Montrose and his army were "bloody butchers, traitors, perfidious, hellish crew," "whereat," says Spalding, "some of the well-disposed audience did tremble, wondering at the railing of the ministry almost everywhere." But, as the same honest chronicler observes in another place, "the chair of veritie was now made a market cross, and the preacher an officer for making of proclamations."

All the harm that was in their power the Covenanters did not fail to inflict upon Montrose for thus disturbing their peace and crippling their means of injuring the King. Immediately after the battle of Tippermuir a Process of Forfeiture was commenced against him, and whenever after that time his name was mentioned in any covenanting document, not only was his new title of Marquis entirely ignored, but he was always spoken of as the *late* Earl of Montrose. His rents were confiscated by the Estates; but their sorest thrust was made through a few of his most devoted friends, who were, unfortunately for him and for themselves, completely in the power of Argyll.

Some of them, including the Napiers, had been placed under strict surveillance even before Montrose made his appearance in the Highlands, and a few months later, these unoffending victims were thrown into prison and kept in rigorous confinement. The ladies of the family were not exempt from persecution. Montrose's three nieces, the Lady Elizabeth Erskine—who had married the young Master of Napier—Lady Stirling of Keir, and her sister, Lilius Napier,

\* *Vide* Process of Forfeiture against Montrose, referring to the battles of Tippermuir and Aberdeen.

† *Vide* papers justifying the murderers of Lord Kilpont and Irvine of Kincausie.

a girl of eighteen, were imprisoned apart from their relations and were at one time in danger of their lives from being confined in a part of the town where the plague was raging. Dr Wishart, captured by Leslie in Newcastle-on-Tyne, was thrown into the Old Tolbooth, or common gaol, and was obliged to petition Parliament to allow him some maintenance, to preserve himself, his wife and five children from perishing by starvation. Montrose's faithful friend, Lord Ogilvie, though, like Wishart, a prisoner of war, was also shut up in the Tolbooth, expecting every day to be condemned to die.

Had Montrose possessed the cruel and vindictive disposition falsely ascribed to him by the Covenanters (after he had declared himself for the King), he might easily have retaliated upon his prisoners, and inflicted upon them the miseries which his own friends were made to suffer; but no such severities ever stained his name, and no woman was ever treated by him as an enemy. The prisoners he took were usually required to give their word of honour that they would not again serve against the King and were set free uninjured. Only a few of the more important among them were confined in the fortress of Blair Athole, that they might be exchanged upon occasion for any of the Royalists who fell into the hands of the Covenanters. These prisoners were invariably treated with kindness and courtesy, nor were any of them ever known to complain that they had met with harsh usage during their detention in Athole.

About the end of November 1644 Argyll himself lay encamped in the neighbourhood of Dunkeld, not far from this very castle of Blair. He had sent his cavalry into winter quarters, and he was now employing every artifice in his power to shake the fidelity of the men of Athole to the royal cause. Montrose was quickly informed of his enemy's machinations, and, issuing forth from the stony defiles of Badenoch with his daring little band of warriors, he marched straight across the mountains with his customary rapidity, and in a single night traversed twenty-four miles of wild, uninhabited



country, covered deep with snow, and supposed to be impassable at any time except by the beaten track.

By this unexpected movement he hoped to surprise Argyll, but before he was half-way to Dunkeld that cautious chieftain had been warned of the danger that threatened him, and leaving his men to shift for themselves he fled to Perth, where there was a strong garrison, and thence proceeded more quietly to Edinburgh. His friends there were confounded by the ill success of their powerful and plausible leader, and their consternation was increased when he announced his unalterable determination to throw up his military commission. They were at once confronted with the difficulty of finding a successor. The Lords Calendar and Lothian both declined the dangerous honour, and at last General Baillie, who had fought at Marston Moor, and was considered one of the best of the Scottish commanders, was induced to accept it. But though Argyll refused to take upon himself any longer the danger and responsibility of conducting the campaign against Montrose, he expected still to be commander-in-chief behind the scenes, and he soon quarrelled with Baillie, because the latter refused to receive his orders in military matters.

Rapid as was the night march from Badenoch, Montrose found, when he reached the braes of Athole, that the covenanting force had decamped; but he was consoled for the disappointment by the return of Colkitto, who had brought with him to his old camping-ground a considerable body of Highlanders, including the Macdonalds of Glengarry and John of Moidart, the Captain of Clanranald, a well-known chieftain, whose clan was at deadly feud with the whole tribe of Campbells.

With this accession of strength the royal lieutenant was not inclined to rest idly in winter quarters, nor could he have remained long among the friendly Athole men without inflicting on them a heavier burden than they could easily bear. The natural kindliness of his disposition, no less than a clear perception of the wisdom of a conciliatory policy, led him to be most considerate in arranging for the supply of his

army when traversing a loyally disposed country. It was his practice, on such occasions, to call a meeting of the country people to inform them what provisions he required, and to ask their advice as to the most convenient way in which the necessities of the army might be supplied. It was not always in his power to pay at once for what he wanted, but his word was trusted, and he was careful that no disproportionate burden should fall upon individuals. This was his behaviour towards his friends. It was the invariable practice in warfare to make the enemy pay as much as possible of the cost of the campaign,\* and stern necessity compelled Montrose to adopt a system towards the foe which was undoubtedly repugnant to his inclinations, and which under his management lost many of its worst features.

The wild warriors assembled in Athole under the leadership of the royal lieutenant had their own ideas as to the best way of combining a plan of campaign for the winter months with full and sufficient maintenance at the enemy's cost. Montrose himself was inclined to march with his newly levied reinforcements to the Lowlands, where alone a really decisive victory could be won; but so daring a venture could not be attempted with any prospect of success unless he could rely on the hearty co-operation of his brave but wilful Highland allies, and he saw clearly that their hearts were fixed on a widely different scheme.

The new recruits from the Western Highlands had all suffered from the galling oppression of the great clan which, under the rule of its present ambitious chief, had become a terror to the surrounding country; and the expedition of 1640, in which Argyll, under shelter of a commission from the Estates, had destroyed with fire and sword the districts inhabited by these western clans, was still fresh in their remembrance. They were willing to aid Montrose rather because they hated Mac Cailin Mhor than because they loved the King, and they burned to retaliate upon their foe in his own country the injuries he had inflicted upon them-

\* The modern system of war indemnity is practically much the same.



selves. Montrose, concerned with questions of national policy, did not share the unbridled desire for personal revenge which animated many of his followers, but he believed that an effective blow aimed at Argyll's wealth and power would be of great service to the royal cause, for that wily nobleman was in fact not only the leader, but in some sort the impersonation of the rebellion in Scotland. Moreover, sound strategy required him to protect his flank and rear by rendering the Campbells once and for all harmless. Accordingly, the royal lieutenant accepted the representations of his council of war.

The undertaking was one of tremendous difficulty. It was now December, and the almost inaccessible mountains of Argyllshire were covered with snow; but the Highlanders, thirsting for revenge, and inured to the climate, made light of all obstacles, and by rapid marches past Loch Tay and through Glen Dochart they advanced straight upon Inverary.

The young Lord Grahame—by this time an active boy of about fifteen—shared the fatigues and risks of this winter campaign, probably because his father feared that otherwise he might fall into the merciless hands of the Covenanters and be consigned to a plague-stricken prison. But the faithful Master Forrett, who was growing old, was afraid to accompany his charge into the savage and gloomy wilds of the great western mountains, and taking leave of his former pupil he returned to the Lowlands. Inoffensive though he was, he did not escape the vigilance of the covenanting committees, and he was at once thrown into prison.

At the first report of Montrose's raid into the country of the Campbells, Argyll had hastened to Inverary, where he could most effectually take measures for the defence of his wide domains, and where he felt secure from the attack of any enemy, however venturesome. He was accustomed to boast that, even in summer, no army could penetrate into his rugged mountain fastnesses, and he had often declared that he would rather lose a hundred thousand crowns than that any mortal should know the passes by which an armed force could make

its way into Argyllshire. But he did not yet know the measure of Montrose's ability and daring.

Within ten days of Christmas, when ice and snow had lent their aid to close the steep and narrow passes of his mountain barriers, Mac Cailin Mhor was scared from his fancied security by the startling tidings that his terrible foe was within a few miles of him. Not trusting to the stone walls of Inverary Castle, he hurried on board a fishing-boat, and fled by sea to Roseneath, where he awaited in safety a visit from General Baillie, who was ordered by the Estates to confer with him upon the best means of suppressing Montrose.

It seems that Baillie was not submissive enough to please Argyll, who, with unconcealed displeasure, let the general know, through some of his friends, that "he should remember it." Argyll had a good memory for offences, and Baillie wrote afterwards in reference to this threat, "His Lordship indeed hath been superabundantly as good as his word." In spite, however, of some bickering between the nominal commander-in-chief and the real King of the Covenant, they finally agreed upon a plan, which, if it had been successfully carried through, would have completely annihilated the Royalists. Measures were immediately taken to put the scheme into execution, and Argyll at once sent over to Ireland to recall Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck, his best and bravest officer.

Meanwhile the royalist army, in three separate bands, continued for nearly six weeks to ravage and lay waste the hostile country. Every clansman of an age to bear arms who fell in the way of the vengeful Highlanders was killed, but the slaughter was not so great as might be supposed,\* for the inhabitants fled to hiding-places unknown to their enemies, and the personal influence of Montrose, when he was present, was always exercised on the side of mercy. Inverary, at that time only a small, meanly built village, was burnt, and

\* The writer of the Clanranald MS., boasting of the injuries inflicted on this occasion upon the hostile clan, gives 898 as the number of the slain, and it may safely be assumed that he would incline to exaggeration.



immense herds of cattle, in which the riches of the country mainly consisted, were driven off or destroyed.

The risks of this expedition were great, for the Royalists were enclosed in a comparatively unknown country, where three or four score determined men might have blocked the passes and prevented their retreat, or a week of severe weather might have thinned their unsheltered ranks. But the winter was mild, and the hostile clan, paralyzed by the suddenness of the attack, could offer no effectual resistance.

About the middle of January 1645, Montrose, drawing together his scattered forces, turned northwards towards Lochaber, and Argyll, who had collected a strong army of his gallant clansmen, strengthened by some eleven hundred of General Baillie's best infantry, marched leisurely in cautious pursuit of the retiring foe. The leading Covenanters at Edinburgh, more than ever alarmed by the unexpected and startling character of the royal lieutenant's latest and most desperate venture, now resolved to strain every nerve to destroy him and his bold followers. "If we get not the life of these worms chirted out of them," wrote the Rev. Robert Baillie, "the reproach will stick on us for ever; it hath much diminished our reputation already." \*

The three armies which had been gathered together for the destruction of the Royalists were ready to take the field about the middle of January. General Baillie, with a large and well-appointed force, held Perth. Lord Seaforth, the head of the great Mackenzie clan, was one of those wavering noblemen whom Montrose hoped to win over to the royal cause, but he was at this juncture the covenanting commander in the north, and his army included a strong body of veteran soldiers from the garrison at Inverness. Lastly, Argyll, with his fierce Highlanders, followed in the rear of the Royalists, who, shut up in a wasted and mountainous country, were thus surrounded by enemies on every side.

Most of the men of Athole and Clanranald had already left the standard to deposit their plunder in their native

\* Baillie, vol. ii. p. 234.

fastnesses; but Montrose, though he had only one thousand five hundred men under his command, intended to attack Seaforth's army before either of the other hostile forces could come up. A rapid march from the boundaries of Argyllshire brought him to Kilcummin, now Fort Augustus, at the head of Loch Ness, within thirty miles of Seaforth's headquarters. Here he encamped to hold a council of war, and to present to his friends and followers, for their signatures, a loyal bond which he had just drawn up. Its purport was to bind those who signed it to stand by each other in defence of the King's just and lawful authority, and it closely resembled those other bonds by which, at different times in his career, Montrose had done his best to unite his countrymen in support of the honest and loyal aims expressed in the first Covenant.

The bond was subscribed on the two last days of January at Kilcummin. "The undeniable sign-manual of Montrose, written as if he meant to set the rest a copy in large text, leads the way. Close beside it appears the firm but school-boy hand of 'Grahame.' Directly under the Marquis signs the good and gallant old Earl of Airlie, no symptoms of trepidation in the tall, upright limbs of the elaborate structure of his loyal name. . . . Then, in tumultuous disorder, placed at every angle, and in every variety of triumphal flourish, timid scrawl, unintelligible symbol and illegible pot-hook, are to be read, or not to be read, the signatures of those cocks of the north, some of whose hands were more apt at the play of the claymore than the pen of caligraphy." \*

Two days were spent over this business, and the Royalists were about to dart down upon Seaforth, when tidings reached Montrose which decided him to make a sudden and complete change of plan. Ian Lom Macdonell, a well-known Highland bard, brought the news that Argyll was wasting and burning Lochaber, and that the Campbells and their Lowland allies, numbering more than three thousand men, were at that moment encamped with their chief round the

\* Napier's *Memoirs of Montrose*, vol. ii. p. 478.



old castle of Inverlochy, not far from the more modern Fort William.

The news was confirmed by Allan Mac Ildowie,\* a royalist chieftain from Lochaber, and Montrose, feeling assured that it was his enemy's intention to follow him at a safe distance, and to come up to embarrass his rear when he should be engaged with Seaforth's army, at once made up his mind to disappoint any such design by attacking Argyll first. Without losing an hour he turned back upon Lochaber. As, however, the success of his daring enterprise depended upon his being able to take the enemy by surprise, he did not follow the road by which he had left Argyllshire, but setting guards to prevent any intelligence of his change of route from reaching the Campbells, he led his men straight across the high and rugged mountains which reared their snow-crowned heads between him and his foe.

This extraordinary march began on Friday morning, January 31st, guided by Ian Lom, through the intricacies of regions wild and almost untrodden. If tradition is to be believed, so far was Montrose from trusting implicitly to the good faith of his Highland guide that he caused him to be bound with cords, and gave orders to have him shot on the first sign of treachery. The royal lieutenant was too familiar with Argyll's tactics not to provide against the possibility of being led into a trap where, shut up in some narrow valley or deep ravine, hidden enemies might suddenly pour down upon him from every side in overwhelming numbers and easily slaughter or capture the whole army. The Bard of Keppoch, however, proved faithful, and as the Royalists made their difficult ascent up the stony bed of the Tarff, and thence by Glen Turret and Glenroy,† to the Spean, they were joined on the way by small parties of sturdy Highlandmen eager to strike, under such a leader as Montrose, a blow at the detested Campbells.

Never before had a Scottish army attempted such a

\* The Mac Ildhuy of Sir Walter Scott, *Legend of Montrose*.

† *Vide* note, end of chapter.

march. As they struggled through the beds of rushing torrents, or climbed the steep sides of trackless and unknown mountains, they seemed a mere handful of insignificant stragglers; and had they been opposed at the more difficult points by a few determined men they must have been driven back with terrible loss. As, however, they succeeded in cutting off or taking prisoner all Argyll's scouts, the Campbells remained in ignorance of the impending danger.

When, on the morning of the second day, Montrose reached the Bridge of Roy, the hardest part of his great venture still lay before him. Avoiding the stretch of level land which lies under the north-western face of Ben Nevis, he plunged into the dark recesses of the mighty mountain, thus keeping his movements entirely hidden from the enemy lying in fancied security on the plain. Dashing through the ice-cold waters of the swollen streams, and taking little food or rest, the Royalists accomplished that day a march of eighteen miles. In the deepening dusk of the February afternoon Montrose himself, with his vanguard, all wet and weary, came to a stand where the gloomy precipices of Glen Nevis frown upon the plain of Inverlochy, and from one of the lower slopes of the great mountain he looked down on the old castle, not much more than a mile distant. Behind the four picturesque round towers and the massive square walls gleamed the waters of Loch Eil and the winding stream of the Lochy, while in front lay encamped the dark masses of Argyll's brave clansmen—the picked warriors of Diarmid and the well-ordered array of their Lowland allies. By eight o'clock the rear of the royalist army had come up, and their presence was quickly revealed to the enemy by the clear moonlight streaming in silver radiance over dark loch and snow-crowned mountain.

The forces of Mac Cailin Mhor, though completely taken by surprise, stood to their arms like brave men, and the tired Royalists could get but little rest after the great fatigues of their march, for Montrose, fearing lest Argyll should give him the slip, caused his men to skirmish all night with the



enemy's outposts. Argyll had no suspicion that the enemy he most dreaded was present in person among the foemen who had emerged so unexpectedly from those wild fastnesses supposed to be inaccessible to outsiders. He believed that they were only the Highland division of Montrose's army, led by one of his principal officers; but, with the prudence that never failed him where his personal safety was concerned, he took refuge before midnight in his galley, which floated conveniently close at hand at the head of the loch, and from this secure position he sent his orders to Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck, who acted as his lieutenant. Other barges loaded with provisions were moored on the loch, ready to supply the Covenanters with everything they needed for comfort or convenience.

Very different was the position of the Royalists. A contemporary writer, describing the hardships they endured, tells us that most of them had not touched a bit of bread for two days, and that on the morning of the battle Montrose and Lord Airlie "had no more to break their fast but a little meal mixed with cold water (called 'drammach') which, out of a hollow dish, they did pick up with their knives for want of spoons."

It was after such a hurried and scanty breakfast, in the cold grey dawn of the winter morning, that the royalist forces were drawn out in order of battle, Montrose himself commanding the main body of the Highlanders and occupying the centre, with the royal standard and the handful of cavalry which, with immense difficulty, he had brought with him over the mountains.

As the earliest sunbeams touched with rosy light the broad snowy summit of Ben Nevis, the cavalry trumpets sounded a cheerful salute to the standard, and revealed to Argyll in his boat on the loch below the unwelcome fact that Montrose himself was the general with whom he had to contend. The Campbells, who formed the centre of Argyll's army, fired the first volley, but the whole line of the royalist army charged down upon them at the word of command, and

Feb. 2,  
1645

broke through their front ranks with irresistible impetus. The gallant Colonel O'Kyan, with his brave Irishmen, was first in the headlong rush down the steep slope and across the plain, and he succeeded in restraining his troops from firing till they were so close to the enemy that the discharge of their muskets is said to have fired the beards of their enemies. Argyll's forces were swept into irretrievable disorder, but his fierce clansmen still made a brave stand, and some of the chiefs were killed where they stood.

Montrose did his utmost to stop the slaughter when the day was won, and he succeeded in saving the lives of many of his gallant foes; but some victorious Highlanders, who looked upon every Campbell as a foe to be exterminated, continued the pursuit for nine miles along the shores of Loch Eil, and at least 1500 of the rebel clan were slain. A small body of Lowland officers and men who had retired into the old castle surrendered on promise of quarter, and were treated by Montrose with courteous consideration.

The battle of Inverlochy inflicted a fatal blow upon the power of the Campbells, and many of the neighbouring clans, who had hitherto lived in impotent terror of Argyll, began at once to offer their willing services to the royal lieutenant. The victorious troops were allowed a few days to refresh themselves after their extraordinary exertions, and Montrose, during this short interval of rest, wrote to the King an account of all that had taken place. A copy of this letter has been preserved, and it is too characteristic of the writer to be omitted.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR SACRED MAJESTY,—The last despatch I sent Your Majesty was by my worthy friend, and Your Majesty's brave servant, Sir William Rollock, from Kintore near Aberdeen, dated the 14th of September last, wherein I acquainted Your Majesty with the good success of your arms in this kingdom, and of the battles the justice of your cause has won over your obdurate rebel subjects. Since Sir William Rollock went I have traversed all the north of Scotland, up to Argyll's country, who durst not stay my coming, or I should have given Your Majesty a good account of him ere now. But at last I have met with him yesterday, to his cost; of which Your Gracious Majesty be pleased to receive the following particulars:—

"After I had laid waste the whole country of Argyll, and brought off



provisions for my army of what could be found, I received information that Argyll was got together with a considerable army, made up chiefly of his own clan and vassals and tenants, with others of the rebels that joined him, and that he was at Inverlochy, where he expected the Earl of Seaforth and the sept of the Frasers to come up to him with all the forces they could get together. Upon this intelligence I departed out of Argyllshire, and marched through Lorn, Glencow and Aber, till I came to Loch Ness, my design being to fall upon Argyll before Seaforth and the Frasers could join him. My march was through inaccessible mountains, where I could have no guides but cowherds, and they scarce acquainted with a place but six miles from their own habitations. If I had been attacked but with 100 men in some of these passes, I must have certainly returned back, for it would have been impossible to force my way, most of the passes being so straight that three men could not march abreast. I was willing to let the world see that Argyll was not the man his Highland men believed him to be, and that it was possible to beat him in his own Highlands. The difficultest march of all was over the Lochaber mountains, which we at last surmounted and came upon the back of the enemy when they least expected us, having cut off some scouts we met about four miles from Inverlochy. Our van came within view of them about five o'clock in the afternoon, and we made a halt till our rear was got up, which would not be done till eight at night. The rebels took the alarm and stood to their arms, as well as we, all night, which was moonlight and very clear. There were some few skirmishes between the rebels and us all night, and with no loss on our side but one man.

"By break of day I ordered my men to be ready to fall on upon the first signal, and I understand since by the prisoners, the rebels did the same. A little after the sun was up both armies met, and the rebels fought for some time with great bravery, the prime of the Campbells giving the first onset, as men that deserved to fight in a better cause. Our men, having a nobler cause, did wonders, and came immediately to push of pike and dint of sword, after their first firing. The rebels could not stand it, but after some resistance at first, began to run, whom we pursued for nine miles together making a great slaughter, which I would have hindered if possible, that I might save Your Majesty's misled subjects, for well I know Your Majesty does not delight in their blood, but in their returning to their duty. There were at least 1500 killed in the battle and the pursuit, among whom there are a great many of the most considerable gentlemen of the name of Campbell, and some of them nearly related to the Earl. I have saved and taken prisoners several of them that have acknowledged to me their fault, and lay all the blame on their Chief. Some gentlemen of the Lowlands that had behaved themselves bravely in the battle, when they saw all lost, fled into the old castle, and upon their surrender I have treated them honourably, and taken their parole never again to bear arms against Your Majesty.

"We have of Your Majesty's army about two hundred wounded, but, I hope, few of them dangerously. I can hear but of four killed, and one, whom I cannot name to Your Majesty but with grief of mind, Sir Thomas Ogilvie, a son of the Earl of Airlie's, of whom I writ to Your Majesty in my last. He is not yet dead, but they say he cannot possibly live, and we give him over for dead. Your Majesty had never a truer servant, nor there never was a braver, honestest gentleman. For the rest of the particulars of this action, I refer myself to the bearer, Mr

Hay, whom Your Majesty knows already, and therefore I need not recommend him.

"Now, Sacred Sir, let me humbly entreat Your Majesty's pardon, if I presume to write you my poor thoughts and opinion about what I heard by a letter I received from my friends in the south last week, as if Your Majesty was entering into a treaty with your rebel Parliament in England. The success of your arms in Scotland does not more rejoice my heart as that news from England is like to break it. And whatever come of me, I will speak my mind freely to Your Majesty, for it is not mine, but Your Majesty's interest I seek.

"When I had the honour of waiting upon Your Majesty last, I told you at full length what I fully understood of the designs of your rebel subjects in both kingdoms, which I had occasion to know as much as any one whatsoever, being at that time, as they thought, entirely in their interest. Your Majesty may remember how much you said you were convinced I was in the right in my opinion of them. I am sure there is nothing fallen out since to make Your Majesty change your judgment in all those things I laid before Your Majesty at that time. The more Your Majesty grants, the more will be asked, and I have too much reason to know that they will not rest satisfied with less than making Your Majesty a king of straw. I hope the news I have received about the treaty may be a mistake, and the rather, that the letter wherewith the Queen was pleased to honour me, dated the 30th of December, mentions no such thing. Yet I know not what to make of the intelligence I received, since it comes from Sir Robert Spottiswoode, who writes it with a great regret; and it is no wonder, considering no man living is a more true subject to Your Majesty than he. Forgive me, Sacred Sovereign, to tell Your Majesty that, in my poor opinion, it is unworthy of a King to treat with rebel subjects while they have the sword in their hands. And though God forbid I should stint Your Majesty's mercy, yet I must declare the horror I am in when I think of a treaty, while Your Majesty and they are in the field with two armies, unless they disband, and submit themselves entirely to Your Majesty's goodness and pardon.

"As to the state of affairs in this kingdom the bearer will fully inform Your Majesty in every particular. And give me leave, in all humility, to assure Your Majesty that, through God's blessing, I am in the fairest hopes of reducing this kingdom to Your Majesty's obedience. And, if the measures I have concerted with your other loyal subjects fail me not, which they hardly can, I doubt not before the end of this summer I shall be able to come to Your Majesty's assistance with a brave army which, backed with the justice of Your Majesty's cause, will make the rebels in England, as well as in Scotland, feel the just rewards of rebellion. Only give me leave, after I have reduced this country to Your Majesty's obedience, and conquered from Dan to Beersheba, to say to Your Majesty then, as David's general did to his master, 'Come thou thyself, lest this country be called by my name.' For in all my actions I aim only at Your Majesty's honour and interest, as becomes one that is to his last breath, may it please Your Sacred Majesty, Your Majesty's most humble, most faithful, and most obedient subject and servant,

MONTROSE.



Before the King received this letter he had directed Secretary Nicholas to send a messenger to Montrose, "not being ashamed," wrote Charles, "to avow that I shall be much guided by what I shall hear from him, and should be much more ashamed to treat in those things (concerning Scotland) without at least communicating with him who hath hazarded so freely and so generously for me."

In this letter the King refers to the Treaty of Uxbridge, and it has been asserted that Montrose's victory at Inverlochy, coupled with his previous successes, led Charles to refuse the terms offered him at this time by the parliamentary leaders; but before the tidings from Scotland could have reached him he had already written letters which prove that he had by that time given up all hopes of a satisfactory conclusion to these negotiations.

The first condition insisted upon in the Treaty was that Episcopacy should be entirely abolished in England and Ireland, the Book of Common Prayer suppressed and prohibited, and the Presbyterian system, in all its narrow rigidity, established throughout the three kingdoms. The Scottish allies of the Parliament would accept no compromise upon this point, and they further required that Charles should not only take the Solemn League and Covenant himself, but that he should also give his consent to an Act of Parliament by which its compulsory signature should be enforced upon every person in England and Ireland.

The Parliamentary Commissioners also demanded that over sixty of the King's friends and supporters, including his nephews Rupert and Maurice, Montrose himself, Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir Richard Grenville—every man, in fact, who had been specially faithful to Charles—should be entirely excluded from the Act of Oblivion which was to shelter all their own adherents. The greatest modern writer on the Civil War, referring to these and other articles insisted on by the Parliament at the Treaty of Uxbridge, remarks that "such demands can only have been made with the object of trampling upon the King's feelings as well as upon his political

authority, and it would have been far more reasonable to ask his consent to an Act of Abdication than to such articles as these." \* Montrose himself could hardly have put his condemnation of the Treaty into stronger words.

If the King had accepted his restoration to power upon condition that he should abandon all those who had loved and served him in his troubles, and that he should consent to the utter destruction of the Church which he loved and revered—the Church which, at his Coronation, he had solemnly sworn to maintain; if he had agreed thus to do violence to his own conscience, and to compel many thousands of his subjects to do the same—then indeed he would have been unworthy of the devotion he inspired, and Montrose could never have written, as he did, a few years later, to Charles II., "I never had passion so great as to serve the King your father."

\* Dr Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, p. 45.

#### MONTROSE'S ROUTE ON HIS COUNTERMARCH FROM KILCUMMIN (FORT AUGUSTUS) TO INVERLOCHY.

The commonly accepted route by the famous pass of Corrieyairack is undoubtedly wrong, and appears to rest on no older authority than Mark Napier, misled probably by the fame of this route in the '45. The road was of Wade's making. In Montrose's days there was none, and probably hardly a track; certainly none in winter. This route would take him many miles eastward needlessly out of his way, and over steeps far higher (2500 feet) than there was any occasion to climb. Study of the map and personal examination of the ground, local tradition, and, above all, the clear authority of the Clanranald MS., all render it certain that, starting from Kilcummin, and ascending the lower waters of the Tarff, the royalist army would cross above Cullachy; thence, parallel to the canal and road, till they struck the Calder Burn above Aberchalder Station and Lodge. Ascending this burn in the hollow, they turned due south up the Alt-na Larach (Burn of the Pass) till they struck the head-waters of the River Turret, whence, at Turret Bridge, they would turn south-west into Glenroy, along the so-called "Parallel Roads," and follow this down to its junction with the Spean near Roy Bridge Station and Hotel.

The significant passage in the Clanranald MS. is as follows: "They marched from Fort Augustus [Kilcummin] over Lairctuirard [*i.e.* Larig Turret] and into Glenroy and over the Spean. . . ." (*Reliquiæ Celticae*, vol. ii. p. 185, English translation.)

In the same translation, the name of the gallant Irish officer usually given as O'Kean, appears variously as "Magnus, son of the Giolla Dubh Mac Cathan" (p. 183), and "O Cathan" (p. 185). This is undoubtedly the most detailed account we have in contemporary records, and in knowledge of the locality is to be relied on.—H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.



## CHAPTER XXI

### RETREAT FROM DUNDEE

"Oh ! be sure of this—

All things are mercies while we count them so ;  
And this believing, not keen poverty . . .  
Nor death, which in a moment might lay low  
Our pleasant plants ; not these, if they should come,  
Shall ever drift our bark of faith ashore,  
Whose steadfast anchor is securely cast  
Within the veil, the veil of things unseen,  
Which now we know not, but shall know hereafter."

ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

TEN days after the battle of Inverlochy the Marquis of 1645  
Argyll gave his own account of the action to the covenanting  
Parliament at Edinburgh, and his friend, Lord Balmerinoch,  
affirmed upon his honour that the army of the Covenant had  
not thirty persons killed in all.\* Argyll, who appeared with  
his left arm tied up in a scarf, assumed, rather than asserted,  
that a hurt which he had received by a fall from his horse  
some weeks before had prevented him from taking any active  
part in the fight. But it soon became known that the Chief  
of the Campbells had not been very exact in his narration,  
and that his army had in fact sustained a crushing defeat.

When the truth came out, the leaders of the Kirk were  
filled with alarm and indignation, and their first impulse was  
to do something to satisfy their longing for instant vengeance.  
A committee of the General Assembly, including Mr David  
Dickson and Mr Andrew Cant, urged upon the Parliament the  
immediate execution of Lord Ogilvie and some others of  
Montrose's personal friends whom they had in their power.  
But a list of prisoners for exchange, which Montrose had just

\* "The contrary being certainly known, it was thought strange that he, who  
was a nobleman, could speak so in a public audience" (Guthry and Balfour). See  
Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 136.

sent in, reminded Argyll that these bloodthirsty counsels were untimely, and he dared not accede to the demands of the Kirk. The zeal and piety of the Assembly were, however, warmly acknowledged, and sentence of forfeiture and death against Montrose and the most distinguished of his followers was pronounced with all possible pomp and solemnity, both in the Parliament House and at the Market Cross. This was the very sentence which was actually carried out without any farther process or trial when, just five years later, the great Marquis fell into the hands of his relentless enemies. But at the time there seemed little likelihood that such a decree should ever take effect, and Montrose could smile from his mountain fastnesses at the impotent threats of the defeated Covenanters.

He had again turned northwards, and striking across country to Loch Ness, he went in search of the northern Covenanters. But the news of Inverlochy had preceded him, and the barons who had met at Elgin, under Lord Seaforth, to form a committee of defence, dispersed on his approach. Seaforth himself fled from the town only two days before Montrose came up, and many of the wealthier citizens followed his example, taking with them their wives and children, and all the property they could carry. On the 19th of February the royalist army entered the town without opposition, and the houses of the absentees fared badly, some of the lately recruited Highlanders, under the Laird of Grant, making themselves conspicuous in the plundering that ensued.

At Elgin Montrose was joined by Lord Gordon, Huntly's eldest son, who had hitherto been kept in close tutelage by Argyll, his uncle on the mother's side. He had never taken any active part for the Covenant, and though, while under the influence of his subtle and plausible guardian, he could have little opportunity of forming a fair judgment as to Montrose's character and aims, his high spirit and generous disposition made it an easy task for Nathaniel Gordon to persuade his young chief that, in embracing the royal cause, he would



find in the King's lieutenant-general a noble and congenial leader.

He was heartily welcomed by Montrose, to whom he soon became enthusiastically attached. With him came his brother Lewis, a perverse and self-willed lad, whose sudden caprices more than once frustrated Montrose's plans and proved a great hindrance to the success of his arms; but it was so all-important to gain the support of the great Gordon clan that to compass this great end he was prepared to face almost any inconvenience. During the fortnight spent at Elgin several of the landed gentlemen of these northern counties gave in their adhesion to the royal lieutenant, and the Earl of Seaforth himself came to offer his allegiance. Montrose, who understood his wavering disposition, did not rely much on his promises of assistance, but the Earl accompanied the Royalists when they left Elgin, and rode with them to Gordon Castle, where he and other new adherents signed the Kilcummin Bond.

In the midst of all this prosperity, while Montrose, full of hope for the future, was enjoying the hospitalities of Gordon Castle, he was stricken by a heavy personal sorrow. The young Lord Grahame, a boy of singular promise, suddenly fell ill, and in a few days died. Throughout all the perils and triumphs of the last eventful six months he had been his father's close companion, and it seems probable that his strength had been too severely tried by the terrible fatigue and hardship of the winter campaign. But there was little leisure for private grief, and within a few days of this great misfortune Montrose was engaged in raising fresh levies in the shires of Banff and Aberdeen, where the influence of Lord Gordon, as well as the natural inclinations of the people, brought considerable reinforcements to his army.

During these marches the estates of the leading Covenanters and the property of their tenants suffered heavily, for Montrose had come to the conclusion that he must, to some extent, fight the Covenanters with their own weapons, and retaliate upon them the injuries they had so unsparingly

inflicted upon their royalist fellow-countrymen ever since the outbreak of the war. Houses and barns were plundered and burnt down, cattle driven off or destroyed. Ruin and desolation marked the track of the troops. But even in this dark picture there are gleams of light.

When the royal lieutenant arrived at Turriff he was met by a deputation from Aberdeen, consisting of "four discreet, well-set burgesses," who represented to him the sufferings which their unfortunate town had continuously endured since the beginning of the troubles, and informed him that "the haill people, men and women, through plain fear of the Irishes, would flee away if His Honour did not give them assurance of safety and protection." "He mildly heard the commissioners," said he was sorry for the calamities of Aberdeen, and bade them not be afraid, for that the Irish soldiers should not come within eight miles of the town, and if he should come himself he would ask nothing but entertainment upon his own charges. The commissioners returned joyfully to the city with their good tidings, "and," says the Aberdeen chronicler, "he truly and nobly kept his promise." \*

That promise was soon put to the test. Though the general feeling of Aberdeen was loyal, there were still a few determined Covenanters left in the town, and through the carelessness of one of the royalist officers they succeeded in doing Montrose a serious injury. Only a few days after the death of the young Lord Grahame, that dashing but somewhat reckless cavalier—Nathaniel Gordon—rode over from the camp at Kintore with about eighty "brave, well-horsed gentlemen," and they entered Aberdeen with no apparent object but to amuse themselves. Setting no watch and taking no precaution against surprise, the cavaliers sat down to feast and make merry with their friends. Their watchful enemies in the city instantly sent word of their unguarded position to Sir John Hurrie, who was encamped with several regiments of horse and foot not many miles distant. With-

\* Spalding.



out a moment's hesitation he got together a strong body of his best cavalry and galloped off, arriving at Aberdeen at eight o'clock in the evening. The cavaliers, carelessly feasting in various quarters of the town, heard the noise and clatter of horses' feet, and some of them, rushing out into the street to see what was the matter, were at once cut down or captured. Sir John did not stay to find the rest of the party but went straight to the stables and carried off all the fine horses which the Royalists had brought in that morning.

Chief among the killed was Donald Farquharson of Monaltrie—"the pride of Braemar," and one of Montrose's bravest and most popular colonels. His body, entirely stripped of the "rich new stand of clothes" he had put on to come to Aberdeen, was found in the street the next morning, and was buried with military honours on Sunday, 17th March, in the Laird of Drum's aisle in the city church of St Nicholas. Montrose was deeply grieved by the death of the gallant chieftain, and he did not conceal his displeasure at the reckless negligence which had caused the loss of several brave officers and of eighty valuable horses to the King's service.

The townspeople were much afraid lest this heavy mischance should be visited upon themselves, and they at once sent commissioners to Montrose to clear themselves as far as possible from complicity in the affair. "He heard them patiently with a woe heart, yet knew well enough who were innocent or guilty in this matter within the town; wisely kept up his mind, and gave the Commissioners an indifferent answer, and so they returned to Aberdeen, not knowing what should be the event." \* Montrose was not the man to visit the offence of a few of its inhabitants upon a whole city, and Aberdeen went unpunished.

One trouble followed quickly upon the heels of another. Sir John Hurrie, after his exploit in Aberdeen, rode off to the town of Montrose, where the Marquis's second son, now—by the death of his elder brother—become Lord Grahame,

\* Spalding.

was studying with his "pedagogue," and the dashing trooper carried off the boy and his tutor to Edinburgh, where they were both closely shut up in the castle. This additional blow fell heavily on Montrose, who had not forgotten his own tedious imprisonment within those walls, and whose anxiety was increased by the knowledge that the plague was raging in Edinburgh. About the same time the brave old Earl of Airlie was taken dangerously ill, and was carried first to Lethentie, and then, for greater safety, to Strathbogie (Gordon Castle), with a guard of three hundred men to protect him.

With a heavy heart Montrose went south and summoned Earl Marischal to return to his allegiance or take the consequences of his disloyalty. This young Earl was by no means a bigoted Covenanter, and had formerly been on the most friendly terms with Montrose, but he had slighted a previous message, at the instigation—it is said—of his wife. On the present occasion his doubtful allegiance to the Covenant was strengthened by the advice and exhortations of that prime agitator, Mr Andrew Cant, and of fifteen of his brother ministers, who had all taken refuge with him and his lady in his impregnable fortress of Dunnottar. No notice was taken of the summons, and after giving him a day to consider the consequences, the Royalists laid waste the surrounding houses and barns on the estate.

As this produced no effect, Montrose gave orders to burn down the towns of Stonehaven and Cowie, both of which were built on Earl Marischal's property. As soon as the fire began the distressed inhabitants came out to Dunnottar with their wives and children, and implored Earl Marischal to give in and save their dwellings; but he gave no heed to their prayers and the work of destruction went on. Such cruel warfare was sadly out of harmony with the naturally lenient disposition of Montrose, but, rightly or wrongly, he had decided that retaliation in kind was necessary, and that the Covenanters must be made to feel that the King still had power to punish those who had used fire and sword with-



out scruple against his loyal subjects. It is at least to Montrose's credit, and to his power of restraining the passions of his wild soldiery, that in this fiery visitation no blood appears to have been spilt.

From Stonehaven the Royalists went forward to Fettercairn and Brechin, signalizing the march by a successful skirmish with Sir John Hurrie and his six hundred troopers. All the skill and experience of that daring soldier were required to save his men from being overtaken and destroyed by Montrose's small body of horse and swift-footed musketeers. Brechin was plundered and partially burnt, and the town of Montrose was occupied by the Royalists, but their commander, influenced perhaps by memories of boyhood, did not permit the place to be in any way injured. At Brechin the royal lieutenant heard that General Baillie, who had been invested with the chief command of the covenanting forces, had been joined by Hurrie, and that several veteran regiments had been recalled from England and Ireland to add to the strength of this army.

It was not the least part of Montrose's service to the royal cause that his victories obliged the Covenanters to withdraw from England large numbers of Scottish soldiers who were fighting in the armies of the Parliament against the King, and not only this, but thousands were detained in Scotland who would otherwise have crossed the Border to add to the strength of the English rebels.

General Baillie was, as Montrose well knew, a more formidable antagonist than any he had yet had to contend with; and, eager to attack him at once, he hastened his march and soon came in sight of the enemy. The River Isla ran between the two armies, and for several days they lay encamped in sight of each other. Baillie was cautious, and Montrose, anxious as he was to give battle, was not strong enough to force a passage across the river in face of the superior force opposed to him. Weary of inaction, he at last sent a trumpeter to General Baillie, challenging him to battle, and offering either to allow the Covenanters to cross the river

without opposition, if their commander would pledge his honour to engage at once, or to bring over his own troops on the same conditions. Baillie replied that he would fight at his own pleasure and not at any other man's dictation.

Finding that he could not compel Baillie either to try the fate of battle or to retreat from his strong position, Montrose raised his camp and turned towards Dunkeld, intending there to cross the Tay. He was well aware of the fact that no victory in the Highlands, however brilliant and complete, could ever decide the great contest, and it was his steadfast aim to transfer the seat of war to the Lowlands whenever a favourable opportunity should occur. With the Gordon cavalry at his command he was better equipped for Lowland warfare than he had ever been before, and he now determined to go south. But an unexpected misfortune changed his plans. Lord Lewis Gordon, either worked upon by letters from his father, or from a sudden caprice of his own, persuaded most of the Gordons to desert Montrose, and he carried them off without the knowledge of his elder brother, who was justly indignant when he discovered too late the departure of his clansmen.

This most disappointing defection obliged Montrose to give up his purpose of crossing the Forth and forced him to return to the north to recruit. But he could not make up his mind to turn his back on the south without at least striking one bold blow for the King, and he resolved to make a sudden attack upon Dundee, which was a great covenanting centre and stronghold. He accordingly gave out that he was still on his way to the south, and believing from the reports of his scouts that Baillie and his army had crossed the Tay and gone to guard the fords of the Forth, he left Dunkeld at midnight on the 3rd of April with about seven hundred and fifty men, including one hundred and fifty horse, and made straight for Dundee. The remainder of his troops, with all the baggage, he sent northward with orders to wait for him at Brechin.

By ten o'clock in the morning, after a march of twenty-



four miles, his small force had reached Dundee, and halted close to the walls. The town had no garrison, and Montrose at once summoned the inhabitants to surrender or to take the consequences of their refusal. The trumpeter who carried the message did not return, and Montrose, rightly supposing that they had either imprisoned or slain his messenger, gave orders to storm the town.

Dundee in 1645 was quite a small town, with four streets converging upon the church and market-place in the centre. The Highlanders assaulted the walls from three different places, and one of the attacking parties—headed probably by Montrose himself—forced an entrance through a part of the walls which happened to be under repair at the time. Just within this corner of the defences stood the Corbie Hill, crowned by a platform of guns,\* and these were at once manned by the Highlanders and turned against the town. The citizens were thus taken in the rear, and the Royalists were able to rush in on all sides. The victorious soldiers were already beginning to pillage the town, when several scouts hurried up in the greatest consternation to confess that the information they had previously given of the enemy's position was entirely mistaken. They found the Marquis standing on the Corbie Hill, whence he could see most of what was going on in the centre of the town, and they gave him the astounding intelligence that General Baillie and Sir John Hurrie, with three thousand foot and eight hundred horse, were at that moment within a mile of the place where they stood.

Escape seemed impossible, for the soldiers, besides being tired with their night march and with the assault, were many of them by this time half drunk, and even if they could be got together, would probably be quickly overtaken by the overwhelming forces of the enemy. Some of Montrose's friends, therefore, counselled him to leave the foot-soldiers to their fate, and to save himself and his small body of cavalry. They suggested that he could easily supply the

\* The Corbie Hill has since been quarried away. See *Deeds of Montrose* for this whole account of the attack, notes 13-14, p. 92.

place of the six hundred men he would lose, but that if he himself were killed or taken prisoner the royal cause in Scotland would be ruined. Some, on the other hand, saying that all was lost, proposed that they should rush upon the enemy in a body and sell their lives as dearly as they could. But Montrose would not hear of deserting his followers in the moment of danger, and he was equally resolved not to fling away his own life and theirs in an act of desperate rashness. Entreating his officers not to despair, he urged the men to do their duty manfully, to trust to his management and to leave the event to God. By immense exertions he got together the excited soldiery scattered through the town, leaving none behind \* (except the imprisoned trumpeter), and sent off his infantry in two bodies in fair marching order. Montrose himself, with the horse, brought up the rear.

The sun was setting when he left Dundee, and by the time the last of the troops filed out of the town the Covenanters were almost within gunshot. Darkness would soon cover the retreat, but the enemy, in two pursuing squadrons, were already close behind, and General Baillie stimulated his men to increased exertion by reminding them of the price of twenty thousand crowns set on Montrose's head. Some of Baillie's cavalry came up with the rear of the Royalists when they were only a few miles out of Dundee, but Montrose was ready for them, and the three foremost fell dead, shot down by the picked musketeers who were skilfully intermingled with the ranks of the retreating horsemen. This warm reception cooled the ardour of the pursuers, and the royalist infantry, inspired by having got the start of the enemy's foot, turned and skirmished successfully with the covenanting horse till it became too dark to fight.

Montrose, to elude Hurrie's cavalry, then led his men several miles along the seashore, till about midnight, when they came close to Arbroath. Baillie had taken care to guard all the ordinary passes to the Grampians, and the

\* Dr Gardiner calls this "a feat beyond the power of any other commander in Europe."



Marquis, foreseeing that this precaution would be taken, doubled back upon his own track, noiselessly passing his pursuers in the night. He then turned north again, and by sunrise next morning brought his tired-out troops across the fords of the River Southesk to the Castle of Carestoun, within three miles of the Highlands.

The soldiers, who had been two days and two nights without sleep, having marched during that time about sixty miles upon hardly any food, sank down on the lawns of Carestoun overpowered by fatigue, while Montrose sent to summon that part of his army which had been ordered to meet him at Brechin, but upon the first alarm these troops had taken a safer route to the mountains. His scouts soon brought him word that the enemy's cavalry was in sight, and that their foot, refreshed with food and sleep, were fast following them. The weary Highlanders were with great difficulty roused from their sound slumbers, and after one more slight skirmish they gained the mountains in safety and rejoined the rest of the army. The Covenanters were bitterly disappointed at losing their prey when it was so nearly within their grasp, and General Baillie was severely blamed for letting "James Grahame and his malignants" escape him when they had seemed so completely trapped.

## CHAPTER XXII

### AULDEARN AND ALFORD

"The misty mountains, smoking lakes,  
The rock's resounding echo,  
The whistling wind that murmur makes  
Shall with me cry hey ho !  
The tossing seas, the tumbling boats,  
Tears dropping from each shore  
Shall tune with me their turtle notes,  
I'll never love thee more."

MONTROSE.

WHILST Montrose was resting in a mountain valley amongst the Grampians from the fatigue of his extraordinary exertions in the retreat from Dundee, a man, weary and footsore, whose ragged clothing made him look like a beggar, asked to see His Excellency the royal lieutenant. He was a messenger from the English Court, and brought a packet of letters for Montrose, including one from the King. He had adopted this disguise because only by some such method could the Royalists in the two countries communicate with each other. The messenger, after staying a short time for rest and refreshment, returned south with letters from Montrose to the King and to some of his friends at Court, including, we may be sure, Sir Robert Spottiswoode and Charles's faithful servant, Endymion Porter. But before the unfortunate envoy reached the Border he was discovered and betrayed to a member of the Committee of Estates. He was immediately sent to Edinburgh with the letters found upon his person, and though he was a man of good family he was hanged next day at the Market Cross.

From these letters the Covenanters gathered that the King, despairing of success in England, entertained a design to lead his army into Scotland and join Montrose. This move, which had probably been suggested by Montrose and was certainly supported by Digby, would have changed the



whole state of affairs in Scotland, and Argyll, greatly alarmed, bent all his energies to frustrate the design.

The covenanting generals who had failed to overtake the Royalists after the storming of Dundee were bitterly reproached for their want of success, though the clerical agitators of the Kirk professed to triumph over the retreat of Montrose, and loudly proclaimed that only a small remnant of the men who had been engaged had been able to escape to the hills. Whether or not the people believed this to be the truth their leaders knew better, and were already organizing new armies to crush their formidable antagonist. Sir John Hurrie, with about one thousand two hundred foot and one hundred and sixty horse, was sent to co-operate with the covenanting clans and nobles of the north. General Baillie was stationed with a strong army near Perth, and Argyll, with his own clansmen and a considerable number of troops from Ireland, remained on the defensive among the fastnesses of the Western Highlands.

The tireless activity of Montrose justified all these great preparations. He sent Lord Gordon to bring back those of his clansmen who had been enticed from the standard by the wayward Lewis, and Colkitto undertook a recruiting expedition among the loyal clans. Within a little more than a week of his retreat from Dundee, the Marquis himself, with five hundred foot and fifty horsemen, swept rapidly down towards Perth, and halted at the village of Crieff, only twelve miles from the town. He was just then on the look-out for some of his friends from the south, who had managed to let him know that he might expect to see them soon, and his anxiety for their safety led him to venture into the close neighbourhood of his watchful enemies.

General Baillie, learning with astonishment that Montrose was lying within a few miles of his own quarters, set out at once, under cover of darkness, in the hope of taking him by surprise. By break of day he was in sight of the small body of Royalists, but their leader was alert and fully prepared. The infantry was drawn up in readiness either to fight or

retreat. The Marquis himself rode out to reconnoitre, and finding that the Covenanters numbered three times his own strength, and that they were besides strong in cavalry, he ordered his men to retire rapidly up the Earn by Comrie, while, with his fifty horsemen, he skirmished with the enemy and covered the retreat.\* He was entirely successful, and marching up the south side of Loch Earn, he camped that night at the head of the loch.

**April 18** On the next day he fell back on Balquhiddy, where he was met by Aboyne, the Marquis of Huntly's second son, who, with several other gentlemen, had broken through the forces besieging Carlisle and made their way to the north. The small party of Royalists then rode on to Loch Katrine, in the hope of finding friends whom they knew to be in hiding in that district. These were a younger brother of Stirling of Keir, and Montrose's nephew, the Master of Napier, who had made their escape from Edinburgh without the knowledge of their relations. The romantic shores of Loch Katrine witnessed a joyful meeting between young Napier and the uncle whom he adored, and the object of the expedition being thus happily accomplished, Montrose turned his bridle rein and rode back faster than he had come.

For a swift messenger had brought tidings to him at Loch Katrine that General Baillie was ravaging and burning the braes of Athole up to the very walls of the Castle of Blair, and that Sir John Hurrie was threatening Lord Gordon further north. Montrose's first thought was for his friend. He at once resolved to attack Hurrie, and in a surprisingly short time he was back on the banks of the Dee, where Lord Gordon rejoined him with a gallant following of a thousand foot and two hundred horse. Colkitto also returned to the standard, bringing with him a small body of the Macdonalds. Without the loss of a single hour the royal lieutenant set out to seek Sir John Hurrie, and came within six miles of him before that dashing trooper suspected that his swift-footed enemy had crossed the Grampians. Montrose wished to force Hurrie

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 97.



into giving battle before he could unite with the covenanting clans of the north, but Sir John hastened forward to Inverness, where he expected to be joined by these auxiliaries, and though closely pursued by the Royalists, he succeeded in effecting his object. With these new allies he had at his command three thousand four hundred foot and four hundred horse, while the army of Montrose was very little over two thousand in number. It was now Sir John's wish to force a battle, and returning at once upon his track, he attempted to surprise the Royalists by a night march. But the weather was wet and windy, and when Hurrie was still some miles distant from the village of Auldearn, where Montrose lay resting that night, some of the covenanting troopers fired a volley to clear the barrels of their muskets, which had been wetted by the rain. The sound was heard by several of the royalist sentinels, and it gave Montrose timely warning of his enemy's approach. By the time Hurrie came in sight of the village the Highlanders were in battle array, ready to advance or retreat as their commander should judge best.

By the dim light of the early morning Montrose saw how greatly superior to him in number were the forces he would have to contend with,\* and he was half inclined not to risk so unequal a conflict. But Hurrie, conscious of his own superiority, pressed him hard, and Baillie, with a still stronger force than that which now confronted the Royalists, was advancing in the rear. To avoid being hemmed in by two superior armies, Montrose decided upon giving battle, and promptly secured a position which compensated by its strength for the inferior number of troops at his command. The village of Auldearn stood high, and yet was half hidden from anyone at a distance by undulating ground. In front of the line of houses and gardens Montrose posted his cannon, with a small detachment of picked men; the rest of his little army he drew up in the valley beneath, quite out of sight of the enemy. Colkitto, with four hundred foot, he stationed on

\* Most of the Athole men had returned to their own country to repair the ravages of the Covenanters.

a piece of rough rocky ground to the right, well defended by dykes and ditches, and further strengthened by a bog in front, with strict orders to remain on the defensive, and on no account to suffer his men to be drawn away from this natural stronghold. In order to induce the enemy to concentrate their attack upon this strong position, where the intricacies of the ground would seriously embarrass cavalry movements, he gave into Colkitto's charge the royal standard, which was usually carried before himself.

The rest of his forces he carried over to the left wing, giving the command of the horse to Lord Gordon, whilst he himself led the foot. His centre and reserve were left to the imagination of the enemy, who were completely deceived by this daring and ingenious device.

As Montrose had hoped, the sight of the royal standard inveigled the enemy into directing their chief attack against the right wing, and while the best part of their cavalry were struggling in vain across the miry and broken ground in that quarter, he prepared for a general assault, in conjunction with Lord Gordon, upon their weakened flanks and centre. But just as he was about to give the word to charge, an officer, upon whose fidelity he could rely, whispered in his ear that Colkitto, with his troops on the right, was routed. Hesitation at that moment would have been fatal, and Montrose instantly exclaimed, "Come, my Lord Gordon, Macdonald is carrying all before him on the right! Shall we leave him all the glory of the day?" With these words, he charged the enemy at the head of the whole line.

Hurrie's horse gave way beneath the impetuous onset of the Gordon cavalry, but the infantry, well armed and superior in numbers, made a brave stand against Montrose's attack. Many of them fell where they stood, and the scene of this fierce conflict is supposed to be marked by a hill, now covered with trees and called Dead Man's Wood, where a large number of skeletons have been found buried. The Marquis did not continue his pursuit of the routed infantry, but swept across with his victorious soldiers to the assistance



of Colkitto and the Highlanders. He found them sorely beset by the covenanting cavalry and veteran foot, for the impetuous Macdonald, whose valour outran his discretion, had allowed the taunts of his enemies to draw him from his defences, and his men had become entangled among the overwhelming numbers of their opponents.

Colkitto performed prodigies of strength and courage. Sheltering himself behind his target, he covered with his own single person the retreat of his followers into the enclosure they had rashly forsaken. But all his exploits could not have saved him and his Highlanders—among whom were many of the Gordons—from destruction, had not his keen-sighted commander come to his rescue. At Montrose's approach, the enemy's horse, who were attacking Colkitto, immediately turned and fled, but the infantry, composed principally of veterans from Ireland, fought desperately, and most of them fell in their ranks.\*

The victorious Royalists followed the pursuit for fourteen miles, and it is said that nearly two-thirds of the enemy were slain, including many officers of distinction. The slaughter was the greater because the Gordons were furiously exasperated by the murder of one of their clansmen a few days before the battle, and as they pursued the fugitives they cried out: "Remember James Gordon of Rynie." This young officer—a mere boy—having been wounded in a skirmish some time before, had been carried to a friend's house to be nursed, and left under the care of another Gordon, who remained to attend him. A party of Covenanters, hearing of the circumstance, came suddenly upon the poor lad, and murdered him in his bed, leaving his friend also for dead. It can hardly be won-

\* Of this victory Dr Gardiner writes: "Anything more different from the waiting tactics by which he had kept in hand the poor handful of mingled horse and foot at Aberdeen it is impossible to conceive. Montrose had at last got a sufficient force of cavalry, and he knew what to do with it." . . . "Montrose had shown himself a master of cavalry tactics, as he had shown himself elsewhere a master of the tactics of Highland war. In whatever form the enemy attacked him, whatsoever might be the varying components of his own army, he was always ready to take advantage of the weakness of the one and of the strength of the other."—*Great Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 178.

dered at that "this inhuman deed made the Gordons take fewer prisoners and give less quarter." \*

The loss of the Royalists was not heavy, but they had a considerable number of wounded. Montrose himself looked after these, and saw to their being properly cared for. The prisoners he treated with his usual lenity. Those who were willing to be loyal subjects for the future he set at liberty, and he enlisted such as were inclined to enter into the King's service. The rest he confined in Blair Castle and other prisons, exchanging them for Royalists when occasion offered.

The captivity of Montrose's friends in Edinburgh became more severe after the battle of Auldearn, and the escape of the Master of Napier was heavily visited upon his relations, in spite of his precautions to free them from any responsibility for his action. Not only was his father, the venerable Lord Napier, fined a large sum of money, but he was closely imprisoned in the Castle of Edinburgh, and no one was allowed access to him. His two daughters, the younger of whom was a girl of eighteen, his son's wife, and his son-in-law, Sir George Stirling, were all treated with the same severity. A month later they all petitioned to be removed from the castle on the ground that their lives were in danger from the plague, six persons having died of that terrible disease within the bounds of the prison. Lord Grahame, who was only twelve or thirteen years old, presented a petition to the same effect. No notice was taken of their request for two months, but at the end of that time an order was granted for their liberation on caution.

An order of the Estates, issued just about this time, illustrates the mean, vexatious tyranny exercised by the self-constituted rulers of Scotland over their prisoners. In reply probably to a petition of the imprisoned ladies, "the Committee of Estates allowed the Constable of the Castle to give Dame Elisabeth Erskine" (the Master of Napier's young wife) "and Mistress Lillias Napier the benefit of the air once or twice a day, provided he was with them, and that none had

\* Spalding.



access or speech with them without warrant, and that when they should go out the Lord Napier and the Laird of Keir *should be kept close in their chambers*.<sup>\*</sup> The unfortunate young ladies would have infinitely preferred a sight of the dear old father to a dull walk on the battlements under escort of their gaoler, and it is difficult to see what object besides petty persecution could possibly have been served by this spiteful regulation.

Only once did Montrose threaten to retaliate upon the Covenanters their severity towards their prisoners. This he did to save the life of Lord Napier's brother, John Napier of Easter Torrie, who had been captured with letters on his person from Montrose to the King. Mindful of the fate which, a month earlier, had befallen his former unhappy messenger, Montrose wrote a strong letter to the covenanting authorities, in which he assured them that if they did any harm to John Napier, he would use "the like severity against some of their friends among his own prisoners." His threat had the desired effect, and the Laird of Easter Torrie was exchanged for a Campbell.

After their victory at Auldearn the Royalists marched to Elgin, and there Montrose stayed a short time for the sake of his wounded men, who could be better attended to in a town than in camp. But he was soon on the march again, bewildering the enemy with his rapid movements, and gaining time to recruit his own forces, which, as usual after a battle, had shrunk to small dimensions. A letter from General Baillie to the Ruling Committee, excusing himself for not having effected anything with the strong body of troops under his command against the troublesome foe, gives a graphic description of Montrose's movements at this time.

"I marched," writes the General, "from Cromar towards Strathbogie, where the rebels were arrived the night before, and Major General Hurrie joined me about a mile from thence with about one hundred horse, who had saved themselves with him at Auldearn. At our approach the rebels drew unto the places of advantage about the yards

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<sup>\*</sup> *Memorials*, p. 210.

and dykes, and I stood embattled before them from four o'clock at night until the morrow, judging them to have been about our own strength.\* Upon the morrow, so soon as it was day, we found they were gone towards Balveny. We marched immediately after them and came in sight of them about Glenlivet . . . but that night they out-marched us, and quartered some six leagues from us. On the next day early, we found they were dislodged, but could find nobody to inform us of their march; yet, by the lying of the grass and heather, we conjectured they were marched to the wood of Abernethy on Spey. Thither I marched and found them on the entry of Badenoch, a very straight country, where, both for inaccessible rocks, woods, and the interposition of the river, it was impossible for us to come at them. Here we lay looking upon one another, the enemy having their meal from Ruthven in Badenoch, and flesh from the country; whereof we saw none, until for want of meal—other victuals we had none, the few horsemen professing they had not eaten in forty-eight hours—I was necessitated to march northward to Inverness to be supplied there.”†

General Baillie's witness to the success of Montrose's commissariat arrangements is not the only indication of the care with which the great Marquis provided for the needs of his troops. A letter written a little later on to John Robertson of Inver, who might be called the Constable of the Castle of Blair, not only exemplifies the personal care and attention which the royal lieutenant gave to this important part of his military duties, but also shows his anxiety not to allow any single person to be unfairly burdened. He gives the strictest orders that the necessary contributions shall be obtained by laying a proportionate “stent” or tax upon everyone in the district, according to his quality and condition, “that everyone may have his share of the burden,” and he adds a promise to pay as soon as he shall have the power to do so.

Two short papers written by Montrose about this time may be quoted in evidence of the care and sympathy he bestowed upon those of his Irish and Highland soldiers who were well behaved, and to show the strong-handed discipline by means of which he did his best to prevent the more disorderly of these troops from becoming an intolerable burden and oppression to the country. The first of these papers is a pass given to a sick Highland soldier, and runs as follows:

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\* Wishart says the Royalists were far inferior in numbers, especially in cavalry.

† *Memorials*, p. 524.



"Whereas the bearer hereof, Donochy of Celly, he being a sick soldier, is to go to the Castle of Blair, these are therefore to will and desire all His Majesty's officers and loving subjects whom this may concern, to suffer the said bearer to pass quietly without trouble or molestation, either in body or goods, he behaving himself as becometh a dutiful subject. These are requiring the keepers of Blair to see the bearer well used, with the rest of the sick soldiers that are there. The 26th of April 1645.\*

MONTROSE."

The second letter is written to the Captain of Blair, and gives a vivid glimpse of some of the difficulties the great Marquis had to contend with. His "Irishes,"† as they were called (though most of them were of Scottish descent), were admirable soldiers as long as actual fighting was going on, but no sooner was a battle over than they were ready for all kinds of riot and mischief, and Montrose had to take the sternest measures to keep them in any kind of order.

He writes:

"Inver: I have oft-times written to you before anent the Irishes who straggled to your country, and for punishing of them; and it is only the neglect of my orders which makes them so insolent. Wherefore these are to will and command you that, immediately after sight hereof, you pursue all such Irishes as can be found in the country with fire and sword. And that you burn the houses of all those who reset (harbour or shelter) them, as you will answer on the contrary at your highest peril. Subscribed at Tullochgoram, 6th of June 1645.

"MONTROSE."‡

The departure of General Baillie's army from the wilds of Badenoch left Montrose free to try his strength against a new antagonist—his old school-companion, Lord Lindsay of the Byres, who was called by the Covenanters Lord Crawford. The real Lord Crawford was their prisoner, and had been deprived by them of his title and estates. Lord Lindsay, who had severely criticised Argyll's management of the war, had lately been appointed to the command of a newly raised army, and was at this time stationed in Angus as a reserve to General Baillie.

\* *Memorials*, p. 181.

† The term Irish was not uncommonly applied to all Gaels. The confusion is quite modern.

‡ *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 205.

Montrose, hoping to take the new general by surprise, suddenly crossed the Grampians, and arrived within nine miles of the new levies of the Covenant before they knew of his approach. An easy and certain victory seemed within his grasp, when the chance was snatched from him by a second desertion of the Gordons and other north-country forces more or less under their influence. The Marquis, deeply disappointed, could only conjecture that the misfortune was caused by secret orders from Huntly, but Lord Gordon, naturally unwilling to believe that his father—jealous as he knew him to be—could be responsible for so treacherous an action, did not conceal his indignation and would have punished with death such of the deserters as were in his power had not Montrose interfered to prevent him. The crippled remnant of the royalist army had no choice but to retreat by the way they had come, through the Spital of Glenshee, and Lord Lindsay, finding no enemy to oppose him, led his men on a predatory expedition through Athole, plundering and burning the whole country in the cruel fashion first introduced by Argyll.

Montrose, whose patience under misfortune equalled his courage in face of danger, began again to recruit in the Highlands. He sent off Lord Gordon and Colonel Nathaniel to bring back the deserters, whilst he retired, with the small number of men who still remained with him, to the entrance of Strathdon, where the half-ruined Tower of Corgarff afforded sufficient shelter in the sunny June weather, and where he was near enough to some of the highest mountains in Scotland to feel safe from any enemies who might dare to follow him. At Corgarff he received intelligence that General Baillie was about to lay siege to Huntly's Castle in the Bog of Gicht, now called Gordon Castle. It was at that time only a great gloomy square tower, six stories high, standing in the centre of a morass, and accessible only by a narrow causeway guarded by a drawbridge.

Colkitto and many of the Highlanders were still absent, but the Gordon cavalry had returned to the standard, and



Montrose, eager to seize any opportunity of conciliating that important clan and their jealous chief, marched with all speed towards the Bog, as the castle was then called. As he supposed Baillie's forces to be greatly superior to his own, both in strength and number, he at first intended only to harass the enemy and draw him away from the Gordon country; but learning on his way that Baillie had been persuaded to transfer to Lord Lindsay a thousand of his own veterans, in exchange for a much smaller number of the new levies, he at once resolved to seek a battle.

The Covenanters were drawn up on a hill at the Kirk of Keith, behind a narrow pass, strongly fortified with artillery and held in force by their cavalry. There was some skirmishing in front of the pass, but Montrose failed to draw them from their strong position. The two armies remained all night under arms, and in the morning Montrose sent a trumpeter to the covenanting general, offering battle. Baillie replied, as he had done before, that he would not take his fighting orders from the enemy, and the Marquis, seeing that force was useless, tried stratagem, and retreated southwards, hoping that the Covenanters might be induced to follow.

The manœuvre was not immediately successful, but two or three days later, General Baillie, having discovered that Colkitto and most of the Highlanders were not with the royalist army, advanced boldly in pursuit, until he encamped for the night within four miles of the little village of Alford.

Early next morning Montrose rode out with a small squadron of horse to observe the movements of the enemy, and while he was examining the fords of the Don, which runs just to the north of the village, intelligence was brought to him that the whole of Baillie's forces, still possessed by the idea that he was fleeing before them, were marching at full speed to Alford, bent upon cutting off his retreat. Montrose galloped back alone, leaving a few horsemen to watch the approach of the enemy, while he drew up his men upon a hill above the village, in such a position that it was difficult for the Covenanters advancing from the other side of the river

to judge of his strength. His reserve, which he entrusted to the command of young Napier, he kept entirely hidden behind the crest of the hill. Hardly had he completed his arrangements, before his mounted cavaliers came riding up with news that the rebels had crossed the river and could not now avoid a battle.

July 2,  
1645

Both armies held strong positions and were nearly equal in the number of their foot, but the Covenanters had six hundred horse, while the Royalists had only two hundred and fifty. For some little time they faced each other without moving, and a contemporary chronicler relates that one of their leaders reminded the covenanting troops that the enemy opposed to them was in the habit of making the first onset. "Do not," he added, "let them have this advantage to-day; engage them instantly!" But it was not easy to be beforehand with Montrose. Before they could act upon this wise advice he had given the word to charge, and with clang of trumpets, and wild shouts from the Highlanders in sonorous Gaelic, the Royalists rushed down the hill upon the waiting enemy.

Lord Gordon was the first to charge the lines of the Covenanters, and their cavalry wavered under the shock of his attack, but the gallant Earl of Balcarres, who commanded the left wing of the rebel horse, quickly rallied his followers, and a fierce hand-to-hand conflict ensued. For some time neither party could gain the advantage, but at last the enemy gave way, and at Colonel Nathaniel Gordon's command the swift musketeers who were mingled with the royalist cavalry sprang forward into the broken ranks, and, throwing down their useless muskets, began to hamstring the horses of their opponents with their dirks. It was at this critical moment that Montrose brought up his reserve under the Master of Napier, and the sudden appearance of a fresh body of troops of unknown numbers decided the fate of the day. The whole line of the covenanting cavalry fled in wild confusion, but the foot, unable to save themselves by flight, refused quarter, and fought desperately till they were almost all cut down.



The battle of Alford was won, but of all Montrose's victories it was the most dearly purchased. Baillie had driven off from the estates of the Marquis of Huntly a number of cattle which had been placed within some enclosure close to the field of battle, under the guard of a body of troopers. Lord Gordon, angry at the sight of his own stolen property, hotly declared that he would himself bring General Baillie out of the very midst of his men, and dashing into the thickest of the fight, near the close of the action, he was in the act of seizing the covenanting general when he fell, mortally wounded by a shot fired from one of the enclosures.

His fall stopped the pursuit, for the sad news spread rapidly, and a solemn hush fell upon the excited soldiery—a hush soon broken by the loud wail of Highland lamentation. Thronging around the body of their dead lord, they wept over his wounds, and kissed his lifeless form in all the abandonment of Celtic grief. They praised his face, beautiful even in death, and cursed the victory which had cost them so dear. Montrose himself could not restrain the expression of his overwhelming grief, for not only had he warmly returned Lord Gordon's enthusiastic affection, but even in that moment of personal loss and sorrow he could not forget that the cause which was dearer to him than life had sustained irreparable loss by the death of the one member of the House of Huntly whose steady fidelity could always be depended on.

Lord Gordon was buried with military pomp in the Cathedral Church of Aberdeen, and the greater part of the army attended in funeral procession, Montrose himself being chief mourner, "and indeed there was reason for it," wrote an old Gordon chronicler, "for never two of such short acquaintance did ever love so dearly."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### KILSYTH

“My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.”

TENNYSON.

**1645** AFTER the battle of Alford Montrose marched southwards, but he could not immediately pursue the advantage he had gained, owing to the departure of most of the Highlanders, who, as usual, had returned to their own homes after the victory. He therefore sent Aboyne, who, on his brother's death, succeeded to the command of the Gordons, to recruit in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. Aboyne was provokingly slow in his operations, and Montrose, after waiting till he was out of patience, wrote to desire his unsteady ally to join him with such levies as he had already raised. Aboyne obeyed, but his recruits were so few in number that the Marquis sent him once more to the north, urging him to return as quickly as possible with as large a body of horse as he could gather.

Crippled by want of cavalry, Montrose was unable at once to carry out his cherished scheme of attacking the Covenanters in the Lowlands. His infantry had, however, been largely reinforced, and was now stronger and more numerous than it had ever been. Patrick Grahame of Inchbrakie, beloved of the men of Athole, had brought considerable reinforcements from that quarter, whilst seven hundred of the brave Macleans from Mull, under Sir Lachlan of Duart and Maclean of Lochbuy, the Captain of Clanranald with five hundred, the brave and steadfast chief of Glengarry, and



several other Highland leaders, each with his gallant following, had lately joined the royal standard.

The Covenanters were not less active in making preparations to resist their victorious enemy. Scared away from Edinburgh by the plague early in July, they attempted to hold their Parliament at Stirling, but there also the pestilence soon showed itself, and they adjourned to Perth. Their first care was to raise a large army to resist Montrose, and General Baillie, who had thrown up his commission in disgust, was obliged, against his own wish, to resume the command. To improve matters he was provided with a military committee of noblemen, including Argyll, and consisting almost entirely of those commanders who had been separately defeated by the royal lieutenant. Perth was strongly garrisoned, and a force of four hundred horse remained within and about the city to protect the Parliament.

It soon appeared that these precautions were not unnecessary, for Montrose, though unable in the absence of the Gordon cavalry to disperse the assembled Covenanters, did not remain inactive. Crossing the Tay at Dunkeld, he encamped in the wood of Methven, about eight miles from Perth. The Covenanters were greatly alarmed at his approach, and the panic was increased when, the next day, a large body of royalist horse was seen advancing towards the city. The gates were shut, and preparations were made to resist Montrose should he attempt to storm the town. But the royal lieutenant's brave show of cavalry was only a stratagem to gain time. He had mounted his musketeers on baggage horses, and mingling them with his regular horsemen had drawn them up in so skilful a manner as to delude the enemy into the belief that he had been reinforced by a strong body of cavalry. This manœuvre kept the four hundred covenanting troopers inactive within the walls of Perth, and made Montrose, for the time, master of the situation.

Aboyne's continued delay, however, gave the Covenanters time to discover not only that they had been imposed upon

by their own fears and the daring of their enemy, but that they were greatly superior to him even in the number of their foot. They therefore advanced from Perth, and endeavoured to force him into an engagement; but after occupying their attention by a show of accepting their challenge, while he sent off his baggage and secured the passes behind him, he retired to the hills without the loss of a single man. His retreat was covered by his small body of cavalry, but the Covenanters still followed, and when they saw that their venturesome enemy had almost gained the mountain passes, where he would be entirely beyond their reach, they made a last effort, and despatched three hundred of their best horsemen in pursuit. The rebel troopers came up boldly with a great shout and loudly uttered taunts, but Montrose had seen their advance, and had picked out twenty of his best Highland musketeers, men who were accustomed to track the deer on their native hills, and whose aim was so true that each bullet brought down its victim. Creeping on hands and knees, their tartan dress making them indistinguishable from the grass and heather through which they moved, they took a steady aim at the foremost of their pursuers, and brought down several of the most distinguished among them. The covenanting troopers, taken by surprise, turned to retreat, and the wild cries of the Highlanders, who, when they saw the confusion of their enemies, sprang from their ambush as though they would attack the whole force, so terrified them that they turned their horses' heads and fled.

Montrose had brought off all his men in safety, but in the haste of retreat a few of the Irish and Highland women "who followed the camp for love of their husbands," remained in the wood of Methven, and fell into the hands of the Covenanters. These helpless and unfortunate creatures were all "foully and shamefully butchered." \* This un-

\* Wishart, *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 117. Wishart is the sole authority for this story, but it so clearly resembles several other deeds of the Covenanters in their struggle with Montrose that there is nothing improbable in the account.



provoked cruelty was no doubt justified in the minds of the pious perpetrators by some reference to the practices of the Israelites in their wars with the inhabitants of Canaan. The existence of the New Testament appears to have been entirely forgotten or ignored by many of the leading ministers of the Kirk and by those who followed their precepts.

The Royalists did not retreat far into the hills, but remained almost within sight of the enemy, waiting for their long-expected cavalry. At length Aboyne and Colonel Nathaniel Gordon arrived with two hundred horse and one hundred and twenty musketeers, mounted like dragoons on carriage horses.\* So small a result, after all his urgent representations, was a great disappointment to Montrose, but a day or two later he was joined by the gallant old Earl of Airlie, who had recovered from his illness, and his son, Sir David Ogilvie, with eighty brave gentlemen of their name. Conspicuous among these cavaliers was Alexander Ogilvie of Innerquharity, a handsome boy, who, though scarcely eighteen, had already distinguished himself by his high spirit and by several acts of bravery in the field.

No sooner had Montrose received these reinforcements than he resolved to march straight against the enemy, and hearing that some of their late levies had returned home, he rode out at the head of his cavalry to judge of the condition of the covenanting army. He came in sight of them a little before sunset, and they, surprised to see him so near, retired within their lines at Methven. Next morning he rode out again to reconnoitre, and found that they had already retired by the Bridge of Earn to their entrenched camp at Kilgraston. He followed with his whole army, and crossing

\* P. Gordon says 400 horse and 800 infantry. He says before this reinforcement Montrose had 80 troopers and 120 mounted infantry. Wishart gives 500 horse at Kilsyth, which seems to confirm P. Gordon, who probably included in his 400 the 80 who came with Airlie. Before Stirling 80, Airlie 80, Gordon 340 = 500. P. Gordon always tends to exaggeration of the doings of the Gordons. On the other hand, if the 500 at Kilsyth included the 120 mounted infantry, the Gordons levied under Aboyne would be reduced to 220, which would be near enough to Wishart's estimate. In any case P. Gordon's 400 must be an exaggeration, or Montrose would have put at least 560 cavalry at Kilsyth and 680 if the mounted infantry were included.—H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

the river some miles above the bridge, he came up to them the next day, and tried to lure them into an engagement, as he was anxious to fight before they were joined by the levies from Fifeshire. But the Covenanters prudently declined to give battle at that time, and were too strongly entrenched to be successfully attacked.

The Royalists next marched towards Fife, and Montrose sent Sir William Rollock and Colonel Nathaniel Gordon, two of the bravest cavaliers in the army, to view the country and collect intelligence. Wishart tells a story of a wonderful rencontre between the cavaliers and a large recruiting party of the Covenanters, in which a dozen of the Royalists, including their two leaders, charged and put to flight two hundred of the new Fife levies. The truth of the story has been questioned, but it is hardly more surprising than other feats performed by Montrose and his followers in the course of the campaign.

The tidings brought to Montrose by Rollock and Gordon made him resolve to cross the Forth without delay, in the hope of tempting the enemy to follow him, as he believed that many of the Fife levies would refuse to go much beyond the bounds of their own country, and though they were mostly composed of shopkeepers and peasants, these recruits were formidable from their overpowering numbers. Montrose therefore advanced towards Stirling with the intention of fighting a decisive battle south of the Forth. It had been his intention in the whole campaign to join the King either in the south of Scotland or the north of England, and this design would, he hoped, be accomplished if he could gain a great victory in the Lowlands.

On their march the army passed through some of Argyll's possessions, and the Macleans avenged some of the injuries they had suffered at the hands of the hostile clan by burning down Castle Campbell—the Castle of Gloom, as it was at one time called—a fine old feudal fortress belonging to the covenanting Marquis. From the lands of Argyll the Royalists proceeded to those of Mar, the father-in-law of Montrose's



devoted nephew, the Master of Napier. The Earl was at least passively loyal, and was on friendly terms with the royal lieutenant, but this circumstance did not prevent the Irish from plundering the town and estate of Alloa as they passed through. Montrose repressed such outrages as far as possible, and when any act of cruelty or oppression could be brought home to the offender it was severely punished; but with an army so undisciplined, and with no means of providing them with regular pay, it was not in the power of the general to prevent a certain amount of injury to property.

The Earl of Mar does not appear to have held Montrose responsible for the excesses of his rough soldiery, for the day after the plundering Irish had passed through he invited the royal lieutenant, and several of the loyal noblemen who were accompanying him, to dine with him at the castle of Alloa. Here they were made welcome and were "liberally feasted," but receiving intelligence that the Covenanters were rapidly advancing, Montrose and his staff took a hasty leave of their host and rode off to overtake the army. They passed by the town of Stirling, which was "consumed with the pestilence," and crossing the Forth that night four miles higher up the river, they made a short halt on the other side about daybreak, and marched forward to Kilsyth. Here Montrose considered the ground so advantageous that he took up a strong position and quietly awaited the approach of the enemy.

The Covenanters were following fast behind, for they were anxious to overtake the Royalists before the Fife levies insisted on returning to their homes, and they believed that the royal lieutenant had been driven across the Forth rather from fear of the superiority of the pursuing force than in accordance with any settled plan of his own. Their track was not less marked by fire and pillage than was that of the uncivilized Irish. Menstrie, a house of the Earl of Stirling, and Airthrey, which belonged to Graham of Braco, were given to the flames, and Argyll sent word to the Earl of Mar

that when the Covenanters returned victorious his castle of Alloa should be destroyed to punish him for having ventured to entertain "that excommunicated traitor, James Grahame."

General Baillie more than once protested against Argyll's practice of "raising fire" on the lands of the Royalists, not so much on the score of its inhumanity as because property was thus destroyed which "might have been a recompense to some good deserver," or, in other words, to some steady Covenanter like himself.

Aug. 15,  
1645

On the morning of the 15th of August the two armies lay encamped within two and a half miles of each other, the Covenanters counting six thousand foot and eight hundred horse, the Royalists four thousand five hundred foot and five hundred horse. The disproportion between the two sides was less considerable than it had been on several previous occasions, and the Fifeshire regiments, who made up nearly half the enemy's infantry, were not to be compared with the loyal clansmen who were to fight on foot for the King that day; but the gallant appearance of Baillie's fine body of cavalry, all clad in shining mail, impressed the Highlanders with awe, and Montrose had to reassure the men by reminding them that these very horsemen had fled before them on the triumphant fields of Auldearn and Alford. Montrose was willing to risk a battle, because, numerous as were the forces of the enemy, their number was likely to be still further increased within a day or two by the levies which had already been raised in Clydesdale by the Earl of Lanerick, and which were at that moment not more than a dozen miles from Kilsyth.

On the other side, Argyll and several of his joint commanders, confident in their numbers, were eager to attack Montrose, and bearing in mind the wonderful way he had of suddenly disappearing when it did not suit him to fight, they were only anxious to intercept his retreat to the mountains. General Baillie, with characteristic caution, tried in vain to hold back his colleagues. He urged that to beat back the



rebels (as he called them) to the hills would do little harm to the Royalists, whilst the loss of the day would be to themselves the loss of the kingdom. He was outvoted and his opinion overruled by his attendant nobles. The Covenanters were resolved to try the effect of directing a battle through their favourite agency—a committee—and they found to their cost that the management of military affairs, to be successful, must be based on the principle of “purest monarchie.” \* Baillie was not even allowed to choose his own battle-ground. He advised that an almost impregnable position, which he pointed out, should be occupied by the troops, in preference to one nearer the Royalists, but the votes of the committee were taken and the General’s advice was rejected by a large majority.

As Montrose, in the early dawn of the summer morning, watched the movements of the enemy, he, like Baillie, realised the critical nature of the approaching contest, for the large army in front of him was apparently the last obstacle that stood between him and the King. He had drawn up his own men in battle array on a large open field of rough hillocky ground, surrounded by hills which sloped steeply down to his position. The lie of the land at that spot made it difficult, if not impossible, for cavalry to attack him from above, and when he saw that the Covenanters were preparing to advance, he cheerfully exclaimed that it had happened just as he would have wished; that a strong position was half the battle, and would make up for want of numbers.

It was still early morning, but the weather was brilliantly fine, and Montrose, mindful of the midday heat in which his soldiers would have to accomplish the difficult task before them, ordered his brave Highlanders to throw off their warm upper clothing and to be ready to fight in their shirts, that

\* “My true and only love, I pray  
This noble world of thee,  
Be governed by no other sway  
But purest monarchie.”

MONTROSE’S “Love Poem.”

they might the more easily charge uphill. The shirt, which was the principal garment of the Highlander in summer, was made of strong coarse linen dyed a sort of saffron yellow, and when any active exertion was required, the long shirt tails would be "tied up out of the way." \* The waistcoat and woollen plaid which they flung off on this occasion would have been a serious encumbrance in action on a hot day in August.

The cavalry, too, were ordered to wear white over their coats in order that they might be easily distinguishable from the enemy's horse. No detail appeared to Montrose unworthy of his attention if it might conduce to the comfort or safety of his men and to the success of the day. The cavalier horse stood prepared for battle, and resolved to conquer or to die.

At the head of the steep glen which separated the royalist position from the high ground, where the enemy were marshalling their troops, there were some small cottages and walled gardens, and to this point of vantage Montrose sent a hundred of his picked Highland musketeers, under Evan Maclean of Treshnish. From the heights above, General Baillie was at that moment reconnoitring the movements of the Royalists, and he saw the thin line of Highlanders stealing one by one through the bushes up the side of the steep, rocky glen, but he could do nothing to prevent them from gaining the point at which they were evidently aiming, nor, though he galloped back at full speed to his main body, lower down the hill, was he in time to stop a regiment of his own musketeers from making an ill-timed advance upon the same position.

Unconscious that the head of the glen was already occupied by their foes, the covenanting musketeers had marched close up to the enclosures, when suddenly fire flashed from every crevice and cranny of the rough stone walls before them, and a hail of bullets poured into their closely packed ranks. Taken completely by surprise, they scattered in

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, note, p. 123.



wild disorder, and the Highlanders, instead of keeping within their defences as they had been ordered to do, were tempted by their easy success to rush out and attack their enemies with the claymore. The Macleans, perceiving the movement, could no longer be restrained from rushing to the aid of their rash fellow-clansmen, and hardly had they started when John of Moidart, the Captain of Clanranald, unwilling to allow the rival clan to be the first to reach the enemy, dashed forward with his five hundred followers, and charged pell-mell up the hill. He and his men overtook the Macleans, raced foot to foot with them, and were the first to reach the dykes behind which the unequal conflict was raging.

Leaping over every obstacle in their way, the Highlanders—about a thousand in number—fell upon the covenanting troops in irresistible onset, and breaking through the ranks of the enemy threw them into confusion. Their success, however, seemed likely to be soon turned into defeat, for the Earl of Balcarres, with three troops of horse and a large body of well-disciplined foot, was advancing to the rescue of the broken regiments. Montrose saw the danger, and turning to the Gordon cavalry, urged them to hasten to the support of the threatened Highlanders. But Lord Gordon was no longer at his side to inspire his clansmen with his own enthusiastic ardour, and the Gordons hung back.

With instant decision Montrose addressed himself to the Earl of Airlie. “The eyes of the whole army are upon you, my Lord of Airlie,” he exclaimed; “you are the only man to bring off those brave fellows and to redeem the error which their rash valour has occasioned.” The gallant old man, in spite of his seventy years and of his late illness, responded with the utmost alacrity to his General’s appeal. At the head of his troop of valiant Ogilvies he charged the covenanting cavalry with such effect that they gave way almost immediately, and falling back upon their foot, and even riding over them, they threw their own columns into irretrievable disorder. Montrose, putting himself at the head of the main body of his army, seized the favourable moment,

and without allowing the enemy time to rally, he gave the signal for a general attack. With a triumphant shout the whole royalist line rushed upon the confused masses of the Covenanters, and routed them at every point. The pursuit continued for fourteen miles and the slaughter was terrible, from five to six thousand of the enemy being slain. The loss of the Royalists was trifling, and all the baggage and arms of the Covenanters fell into the hands of the victors.

Not one of the covenanting leaders was killed, or even wounded, though Baillie, in his account of the battle, says he did not see any of the officers "careful to save themselves *before* the routing of the regiments." A brother of Lord Burleigh and some few officers of distinction were made prisoners, but General Baillie and most of the noble members of his military committee saved themselves by an early flight and took refuge in Stirling Castle. Among the first to flee was the Marquis of Argyll, "who never looked over his shoulder until, after twenty miles riding, he reached the Queen's ferry," when with several of his friends he got out to sea in a vessel which he found lying at anchor in the Forth and which landed him safely at Newcastle.

Montrose treated his prisoners with his usual clemency, and dismissed most of them upon their giving their word of honour never again to bear arms against the King. The army he had thus defeated and destroyed had been intended by some of the covenanting leaders for service against the King in England, and the Scottish Commissioners in London were at this very time pressing that it might be sent without delay to the assistance of the parliamentary forces, urging that it would be easier and cheaper to defeat Montrose in England than in Scotland.



## CHAPTER XXIV

PHILIPHAUGH

"A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night,  
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,  
Stand in the spacious firmament of Time,  
Fixed as a star ; such glory is thy right.  
Alas ! it may not be, for earthly fame  
Is Fortune's frail dependent ; yet there lives  
A Judge who, as man claims by merit, gives."

WORDSWORTH.

MONTROSE's last great victory re-established, for a short **August** time, the King's authority in Scotland. No covenanting <sup>1645</sup> army was left in the country, and the usurping nobles fled to England or Ireland. Not only did many noblemen and gentlemen hasten to congratulate the royal lieutenant upon his success, but deputies from all parts of the kingdom flocked in to profess their allegiance to the King, and to proffer their obedience to his representative.

Such was Montrose's moderation in this hour of triumph that his bitterest enemies have failed to find matter for accusation against him in the use he made of his almost unlimited power. His one aim and object was to win back the affections of the people to the King, and to restore to his countrymen that peace and prosperity which he believed they could enjoy only under the rule of their lawful Sovereign. The country resounded with his praises, and men who a few days before had not ventured even to speak of him by his own title, now lauded to the skies his steadfast resolution and intrepidity in danger, his patience under the severest hardships, his strict observance of his promises, and his clemency towards his prisoners.

The day after the battle of Kilsyth, Montrose marched with his army into Clydesdale to disperse the levies raised by Lanerick and Glencairn, but they had fled on receiving

the first accounts of the defeat of their party; and though Montrose sent the most pressing messages to induce Lanerick to return to his allegiance, and assured him that the King would freely forgive the past, the Earl resolutely refused the invitation, and said plainly that he would encourage no vain hopes. Disappointing as was this answer to his friendly overtures, Montrose respected Lanerick for his frank and open conduct on this occasion, and acknowledged that it contrasted favourably with the time-serving and double-dealing of too many of the Scottish nobles of that period. The mere approach of the Royalists was enough to disperse the covenanting levies, and the royal lieutenant, entering Glasgow without opposition, was received with acclamations.

Glasgow was in those days a clean, well-built and compact city. The tall gabled houses clustered closely round the old Cathedral, which had, only a few years before this date, been the pride and glory of the place. The inhabitants had clung to their Bishop and their Cathedral, and the first attack upon these old institutions—which even the rage of the Scottish Reformation had spared—had been repelled with energy. But the new fanaticism had been too strong for them. Their Bishop had shared the fate of his brethren, and the walls of their venerable and beautiful old church had often resounded with the political harangues that took so prominent a place in the new gospel of Presbyterianism.

Notwithstanding eight years of stern repression, the old feelings of loyalty to the King and reverence for lawful authority still lingered in the breasts of many of the townspeople, and the victorious General was greeted with a genuine welcome. But the Irish soldiers and Highland clansmen who made up the bulk of his army were regarded with great apprehension, and Montrose showed his sympathy with the feelings of the citizens by giving the strictest orders to his followers to abstain from all acts of violence and hostility. In order to make obedience easier, he accepted from the magistrates an offer of £500 to be divided among the troops, but he afterwards remitted the payment of this sum on the



supplication of the townsmen, hoping to obtain payment for his soldiers in a less burdensome manner. This piece of leniency gave considerable offence to the Highlanders. When, in spite of the General's strict commands, it was discovered that several acts of plunder and oppression had taken place, the offenders were promptly punished with death. It was perhaps to remove his army from temptation, as well as to relieve the fears of the people of Glasgow, that on the second day after his arrival Montrose marched out of the town with all his followers, and encamped at Bothwell, six miles off, at the same time granting the inhabitants of Glasgow a guard of their own citizens to protect the town.

At Bothwell the royal lieutenant was joined by the Marquis of Douglas, the Earls of Linlithgow, Annandale and Hartfell, with many other nobles and heads of houses, who publicly acknowledged him as the King's representative in Scotland. Some of the new adherents were sincere, and their loyal inclinations had hitherto been kept in check only by the iron rule of Argyll and his clerical subordinates, but many of them belonged to that numerous class whose first object in life is the safety of their own persons and estates, and who are always to be found on the side of the victors.

Montrose had now a brilliant following, and his Court, as it may be called, is described by an eye-witness, writing in the degenerate days of Charles II., in the following words:

"The camp of the Marquis was an academy admirably replenished with discourses of the best and deepest sciences, whose several parts were strongly held up under him the head, by those knowing noble souls, the Earls of Kinnoul and Airlie, the Lords Gordon, Ogilvie, Napier and Madertie, and the two famous Spottiswoodes, Sir Robert and his nephew, whose heads were too precious to be cut off by those who knew not how to understand them. This I am bold to mention, because such noble discourses banished from his quarter all obscene and scurrilous language, with all those offensive satirical reflections which are now the only current wit among us, and if any such peeped forth in his presence, his severe looks told the speaker it was unwelcome."\*

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\* Sydsenf in the preface to a small volume dedicated to the second Marquis of Montrose.

There is plenty of evidence to show that Montrose's love of letters clung to him through all the ups and downs of his stormy career, and during his short period of prosperity he wrote to Drummond of Hawthornden, the poet, desiring him to repair to the leaguer at Bothwell, and to bring with him "Irene" and some other good and loyal "pieces," that measures might at once be taken "for putting them to the press to the contentment of all His Majesty's good subjects."

The poet wrote in answer:

"Now, since by the mercy of God, in Your Excellency's victorious arms, the Golden Age is returned, His Majesty's crown re-established—the many-headed monster nearly quelled—if that piece can do any service, Your Excellency, so soon as it can be transcribed, shall command it either to be buried in oblivion if it deserve, or published to the world. So Your Excellency, as you have granted me a protection of my fortunes, will be my patron and protector of my papers: and deign to accept of him who shall ever continue.—Your Excellency's most humble servant,  
W. DRUMMOND."

The first use Montrose made of his victory was to set at liberty those friends and relations of his own who had so long endured the hardships of a close and rigorous imprisonment. Several of them were daily expecting that the sentence of death, already pronounced against them, would be put into execution. Amongst these, one of the greatest sufferers was Lord Ogilvie—the eldest son of the Earl of Airlie—who had been kept a close prisoner ever since the summer of the previous year, when he had fallen into the hands of the enemy on his way to Oxford with Montrose's letters to the King. Together with the loyal Earl of Crawford he had been thrown into the common gaol of Edinburgh, and both had been treated with great inhumanity.

"The humble petition" of his wife, Helen Ogilvie, presented to "the Honourable Estates of Parliament," just a week before the battle of Kilsyth, when Lord Ogilvie had endured a whole year of this "loathsome imprisonment," describes more clearly than any other words could do the sufferings of the high-spirited young nobleman whose only



crime was that he was a royalist and the faithful friend of Montrose.

“The dangerous and pitiful estate of my husband”—so runs the petition—“forceth me with tears to implore Your Lordships’ compassion. For first by his long imprisonment his body is visibly decayed and pined away, and the strength thereof altogether abated, so that he is not able of himself to stand or walk. Next, there is only one boy allowed to attend him, whose father lately died of the pest, with whom the boy was shortly before his decease. Thirdly, the house from whence he was furnished his meat and drink is infected, and divers persons therein died of the plague, and by its visitation of the town of Edinburgh there are few left of that sort who can or will afford him any entertainment, and many times he will be forty-eight hours without so much as a cup of cold water, and which distress is likely daily to increase if it shall not please God in His mercy to stay the devouring pestilence in that town: whereby he is like to die for hunger.” \*

The petition was so far granted, that the Committee of Estates ordered Lord Ogilvie to be removed from the Tolbooth to a prison in the Isle of Bass; but before the change could be made, Montrose had become, for the time, master of the kingdom, and sent his nephew, young Napier, with Colonel Nathaniel Gordon at the head of a strong body of horse, to Edinburgh, for the express purpose of liberating the prisoners. He charged them to use no unnecessary violence, nor, in case the city surrendered, to suffer the soldiers, for fear of infection, to enter the plague-stricken city. Infection was not the only danger he wished to guard against. He feared lest, in their rage against a place which they looked upon as a hotbed of rebellion, the troops should injure the town or oppress the inhabitants.

On his way to the capital Napier had the happiness of releasing from the palace prison of Linlithgow his wife, to whom he was most tenderly attached, his venerable father,

\* *Memorials of Montrose*, vol. ii. p. 227.

his two sisters, and his brother-in-law, the Laird of Keir. In tardy compliance with their petition to be removed from their pest-ridden prison in the Castle of Edinburgh they had been transferred to Linlithgow only a fortnight earlier, and it seems probable that they owed this small mercy more to Argyll's dread of Montrose, who was at that time threatening the assembled Covenanters at Perth, than to any compassion felt by their rulers for their "comfortless estate," as set forth in their petition.

The approach of the Royalists filled the inhabitants of Edinburgh with consternation, and they implored the prisoners to intercede for them with their friends. Lord Ogilvie and Ludovick, Lord Crawford, whose earldom the "Estates" had transferred to his covenanting cousin, Lord Lindsay, were specially entreated to act as mediators. They willingly undertook the office, and comforted the terrified magistrates with the assurance that neither the King nor Montrose had the least desire for vengeance, or sought any other end than the happiness and prosperity of the people. The two noblemen accompanied the delegates who were commissioned to convey the submission of the city to the royal lieutenant, and set out with them to meet Napier, who, according to his orders, had halted with his troop of cavaliers four miles out of Edinburgh. The whole party, including Lord Napier and the ladies of his family, rode together to the camp of Bothwell.

This happy meeting was one of the brightest spots in Montrose's troubled life. Crawford and Ogilvie he had hardly expected to see again, and Wishart, who was soon to share their happiness, tells us that the Marquis "was transported with joy" at the sight of these "dearest friends." Their haggard looks told of the sufferings they had endured, and Montrose was eager to do everything he could for their comfort and welfare.

The delegates from Edinburgh, who gave in their humble submission and were profuse in their offers and promises, were graciously received by Montrose, and he only required



them to give loyal obedience to the King, to keep up no correspondence with the rebels, to set at liberty all Royalists confined in the city, and to procure the surrender of the Castle of Edinburgh, a thing which he knew to be in their power. The young Lord Grahame, who had not been removed from Edinburgh with the Napiers, was still a prisoner within the castle, and it is said that after the battle of Kilsyth he refused to be exchanged, lest his father should lose the advantage of retaining some important prisoner.

Much relieved by the result of their mission, the delegates returned to Edinburgh, and at once released all the royalist prisoners in the Tolbooth, among whom were Dr Wishart and young Irvine of Drum, whose younger brother had died in the prison of heartbreak and hardship. No family in Scotland suffered more heavily for their loyalty than the Irvines of Drum, and the miseries Dr Wishart endured for nearly a year in the "thieves' hole made him a friend of prisoners for ever." \*

By this time the King had heard of the victory of Kilsyth and the total dispersion of his enemies in Scotland. Since the fatal battle of Naseby, on the 14th of June, the prospects of the royal cause in England had become daily more hopeless, and Charles, who had for some time been thinking of joining Montrose, now resolved to carry out the plan. Several weeks before Kilsyth he had sent off Sir Robert Spottiswoode, his Secretary of State for Scotland, with letters from himself and a new commission appointing Montrose Governor and Captain-General of Scotland, a position which had hitherto been held, at the Marquis's own desire, by Prince Maurice.

Spottiswoode, who was an intimate and much-beloved friend of the Marquis, arrived at Bothwell on the first of September, and Montrose at once made use of his new powers to summon a free Parliament, which was to meet at Glasgow in October. Letters dated 2nd September were sent off

\* Preface to *Deeds of Montrose*.

to all the Scottish towns, requiring the burghers to make choice of "honest religious and loyal persons" to represent them in Parliament, with the special object of "settling religion and peace, and freeing the oppressed subjects from those insupportable burdens" under which the country was groaning.

This duty performed, Montrose, whose imaginative temperament led him to take delight in picturesque and stately ceremonial, ordered a Grand Review to be held on the 3rd of September in honour of the high commission conferred upon him by the King. The victorious army, numbering from five to six thousand men; was drawn out on the banks of the Clyde, not far from the fine old Castle of Bothwell, and the Marquis, standing under the unfurled flag that had led the van in six brilliant victories, received the new commission in due form from the hands of Sir Robert Spottiswoode, after which it was read out in the hearing of the assembled thousands.

Montrose then addressed the troops, and in simple, straightforward words congratulated them on the achievements which he attributed to their gallant and loyal support of a noble cause. The kind of impression he made upon his audience, the personal attraction by which he held the men who served with him and under him, are vividly described in a contemporary manuscript written by one who knew him well, Patrick Gordon of Cluny.

Gordon pictures the well-proportioned, active figure, the clear colouring, the grave, steadfast expression of countenance, the grey eyes sparkling and full of life, and then, leaving mere externals, he goes on to describe Montrose's character. "Of speech, slow but witty, and full of sense, a person graceful, courtly, and so winning upon the beholder that it seemed to claim reverence without suing for it; for he was so affable, so courteous, so benign, that he seemed verily to scorn ostentation and keeping of state, and therefore he quickly made a conquest of the hearts of all his followers, so that when he list he could have led them in a chain to have fol-



lowed him with cheerfulness in all his enterprises, and I am persuaded that this gracious, humane and courteous freedom of behaviour, being certainly acceptable before God as well as man, was that which won him so much renown, and enabled him, chiefly in the love of his followers, to go through so great enterprises."

Gordon contrasts the haughty and overbearing manner of some English nobles with Montrose's natural inclination to "humility, courtesy, gentleness and winning behaviour." "He did not seem to affect state, nor to claim reverence . . . but in a noble yet courteous way he seemed to slight that vanishing smoke of greatness, affecting rather the real possession of men's hearts than the frothy and outward show of reverence, and therefore was all reverence thrust upon him, because all did love him, all did honour him and reverence him, yea, having once acquired their hearts, they were ready not only to honour him, but to quarrel with any that would not honour him, and would not spare their fortunes nor their dearest hearts' blood to the end he might be honoured. Because they saw that he took the right course to obtain honour, he had found the right way to be revered, and thereby was approved that prophetic maxim which hath never failed, nor never shall fail, being pronounced by the Fountain of Truth, 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'"

The memorable scene upon the banks of the Clyde marks the moment of Montrose's highest triumph, but even then he was beset with difficulties which might well have daunted any spirit less dauntless than his own. The Lowland population recoiled from him as the commander of the dreaded Highlanders whose merciless swords had spilt the blood of so many of their race in battle and pursuit during the last twelve months. Bowed down as they were beneath the oppressive taxation of their usurping rulers, and the heavy yoke of their intolerant and tyrannical spiritual guides, they yet clung to their fetters, and held apart from him who only desired to be their liberator, and whose lenient rule, had time

been allowed him, would soon have contrasted favourably with the hard and selfish policy of Argyll.\* Even as it was, Montrose's gentleness of bearing induced a considerable number of private gentlemen, ministers and citizens to avow themselves friendly to their new governor, and to take written passes and protections from him, for which in the dark days that were coming they would have to pay dearly.

However encouraging to Montrose might be the friendly overtures made by a few of the towns and by individuals, he knew well that on his gallant army rested all his hopes of holding Scotland for the King. And that army was even now, on this glorious 3rd of September, melting away from him like a snow wreath under the summer sun. The main body of Highlanders—about three thousand in number—were eager to return to their homes, and they, at least, had some excuse for their restlessness. Their fields had been laid bare, and their houses burnt down by the Covenanters, and they urged that they must have a few weeks to provide food and shelter for their families before winter set in. Montrose had no power to retain them, for they were all volunteers. He therefore dismissed them with kind words and encouragement, hoping thus to induce them to return the sooner to the royal standard. Sir Alaster Macdonald was, at his own request, appointed their leader, and he solemnly promised to bring them back in forty days. If he ever intended to fulfil this pledge he soon forgot it, and he never again looked upon the face of his heroic commander. He speedily became engrossed in a petty warfare on his own account in Argyllshire, and, unsupported by the genius of Montrose, he sank into well-merited obscurity, and died two years later, stabbed in the back in an engagement in the north of Ireland.

Besides the commission, Sir Robert Spottiswoode brought

\* Modern historians talk of the services rendered by the Kirk at this time to national independence, but looking at the actual condition of Scotland from 1640 to 1650, what sort of independence do we see? The mass of the people were enslaved under a grinding tyranny, and no man could call his soul his own. If Charles and his bishops had chastised them with whips, Argyll and his ministers chastised them with scorpions.



letters from the King to Montrose, directing him to march as speedily as possible to the Border, there to combine with the Earls of Hume, Roxburgh and Traquair, and to await the arrival of a body of English cavaliers, whom the King promised to send immediately to the Marquis's assistance. These three noblemen had already urged him to join them, but though he was most anxious to secure their co-operation, they had given him so much reason to doubt their steadfastness and sincerity that he had at first hesitated to leave his leaguer at Bothwell.

The King's repeated commands, however, left him no choice, and the day after the review he sent on the Marquis of Douglas and Lord Ogilvie to raise fresh levies of horse in the Border counties. He began his march to the Tweed with less than half the fighting strength that had lately graced the standard, but he was full of hope, for with his well-mounted following of Gordons and Ogilvies, and the still considerable body of gallant Highlanders and Irish troops who remained with him, he felt confident he could face any force that might be brought against him, and in less than a week's time the promised succour from England would give him an army which neither Leslie nor any other covenanting commander could hope to oppose with success.

But these bright hopes were destined to be rudely destroyed. Only two days after the royalist army had set out Lord Aboyne left the standard, taking with him not only the Gordon cavalry, but all the other north-country clans under his influence. His desertion appears to have been partly owing to jealousy of Lord Ogilvie and partly to the intrigues which Argyll set on foot to entice the Gordons from the side of the governor at this critical moment. In vain Montrose entreated him to remain, if only a single week longer, by which time he hoped to be joined by the promised auxiliaries from England. In vain Lord Ogilvie wrote a kindly persuasive letter to his capricious friend, warning him that Argyll's oaths and promises were not to be depended on,

and prophesying most truly that the covenanting Marquis would do his best to destroy the noble House of Gordon. Aboyne would listen to no one. He persisted in his untimely desertion, and by so doing finally ruined the royal cause in Scotland.

Scanty as was the following that remained to Montrose after the desertion of the Gordons, he continued his march southwards, buoyed up by the hope of the promised reinforcement from England, and he joined Lord Douglas, whose undisciplined recruits, consisting largely of shepherds and ploughmen, were already deserting in large numbers. It was arranged that Sunday, the 6th of September, should be a day of rest for the troops, and Dr Wishart was to preach to them at Cranston Kirk; but early that morning came the startling intelligence that David Leslie, with a strong force of cavalry, had already reached Berwick. This was an unexpected blow, for though it was known that Argyll, from his refuge at Berwick, had summoned to the aid of the fallen "cause" the best general that the Covenant possessed, with the greater part of the Scottish troops in arms against the King in England, the Scottish Royalists had fully expected that Charles, who was still at the head of a well-equipped army of at least four thousand men, would have made some attempt to check Leslie's advance.

Nor was this hope unreasonable. The covenanting General had halted after a long day's march at Rotherham, within a few miles of the strong royalist force, and Leslie afterwards avowed that if the King had at that time attacked his tired and jaded troops they could have made but little resistance. In all probability the Covenanters would have been driven back, and the surprise of Philiphaugh would have been averted. Unfortunately, the timid counsellors by whom Charles was surrounded were thinking more of their own safety than of the success of their cause. Imagining that the object of the Covenanters was an attack upon themselves, they urged the King to turn back to Newark without striking a blow, and he acted upon their advice. Had



he but known it, in so doing he at once sacrificed Montrose and threw away his own last chance.

Lord Erskine, who sent the Scottish Royalists the intelligence of Leslie's approach, hoped that their leader, adventurous as he was, would seek safety by an immediate retreat to the Highlands, but Montrose could not resolve to throw up the last chance of retaining his hold on the Lowlands, and of effecting a junction with the English cavaliers whom he was daily expecting. Accordingly, the service and sermon were countermanded, and the small body of Royalists hurried off in the hope of joining the Border lords and their followers before Leslie could attack them; but when Montrose had arrived within three or four miles of their quarters he found that Hume and Roxburgh had surrendered themselves and their houses, not without grave suspicion of treachery on their part, to a party of Leslie's horse.

Montrose's last hope had failed him. His retreat to the Highlands was now strongly barred by the enemy, and there was no longer any hope of help from the English cavaliers. Still, he would not despair, and he turned to the west, intending to raise in Ayrshire and Nithsdale a sufficient reinforcement of horse to enable him to face Leslie's cavalry. During the march Sir Robert Spottiswoode wrote to Lord Digby a letter dated "Near Kelso, the 10th of September," giving a graphic account of the overwhelming difficulties Montrose had to grapple with, and expressing his surprise and disappointment that not only had the English Royalists failed to check Leslie's advance, but that the promised body of cavalry, which would have enabled the Marquis to try the chance of war against this new and formidable antagonist, had never made its appearance.

Two days after the date of this letter Montrose's mere nucleus of an army, consisting of about five or six hundred Irish foot, and a small body of the newly levied horse, encamped under shelter of a wood on the plain of Philiphaugh, near Selkirk. The Marquis himself, with a small number of his personal friends and a bodyguard of his best cavalry,

passed the night of the 12th of September in Selkirk, on the opposite bank of the Ettrick. He gave the strictest orders to his cavalry officers to send out trusty scouts, and to be very careful in placing their sentinels. These important matters Montrose usually trusted to no one's vigilance but his own, but that night he had to write to the King despatches which were to be sent off before daylight. During the night uncertain reports were brought to him from time to time, and he transmitted them to his officers, who were men of considerable military experience. But all the scouts affirmed that there was not an enemy in arms within ten miles of them, and a party of cavalry, which was sent out at daybreak to reconnoitre, returned with the same account.

They were terribly mistaken. David Leslie, with an army of veterans numbering nearly six thousand men, chiefly cavalry, lay encamped that night within four miles of Selkirk, and with the earliest morning light he marched in order of battle straight upon the unsuspecting Royalists. A thick fog which overspread the face of the country on that September morning helped to conceal his stealthy approach, and he was within half a mile of the camp before the dismayed outposts discovered their danger. Montrose was a mile away, and the river lay between him and his handful of troops. But the news that Leslie was upon them quickly reached him, and flinging himself on the first horse he could find he galloped to the scene of action.

Here everything was in confusion. The sudden descent of the enemy upon them had thrown the newly levied horse into such a panic that they thought only of saving themselves, and could not even be brought into line. The infantry, though too brave to think of flight on the first alarm, were in the greatest disorder, and many of their officers never reached the field.

When Montrose came upon the scene it was too late to retreat, for Leslie's attack had already begun. Twice he charged the right wing of the Royalists, where the Marquis himself and his brave bodyguard were fighting gallantly n



face of desperate odds, and twice the Covenanters were repulsed, but it was a contest of thousands against hundreds, and the foot on the left were already overpowered. The brave Irishmen made a gallant defence, but they were hemmed in by overwhelming numbers; half of them were killed,\* and the rest, upon promise of quarter, threw down their arms. Almost at the same moment the small troop of royalist cavalry was attacked from behind by a body of two thousand infantry whom Leslie had sent round by the river. Further resistance was hopeless, and most of the cavaliers made their retreat as best they could, before they were completely surrounded by the enemy.

Montrose, however, would not give way. It was the first time he had ever seen his troops routed, and he fought on with the single thought of selling his life as dearly as possible. Rallying round him about thirty of his scattered horse, he made a desperate stand, but Sir John Dalziel and Lord Douglas implored him, for the sake of the King and all that he held sacred, not to throw away his life and thus sacrifice the royal cause. They declared that they would live or die with him, and Montrose yielded to their entreaties. Putting himself at the head of the few who still remained to him, he took advantage of a moment when many of the Covenanters were busy plundering the baggage and cut his way out through the midst of the enemy.

A party of Leslie's horse followed the fugitives, and ventured too far for their own safety. Montrose and his cavaliers turned upon them, killed some of the foremost, and actually took prisoner the captain of a troop of horse and two standard-bearers (with their ensigns), whose ambition to capture the royal lieutenant had spurred them on beyond the rest of their companions.

About fifteen miles from Philiphaugh Montrose overtook a considerable number of his own cavalry who had fled

\* See Mr Andrew Lang's *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 158. Wishart says that few of the foot fell in the battle which only lasted for an hour, and he states that two hundred and fifty of the foot, "armed with their swords," rejoined Montrose the next day. *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 144.

earlier in the day, and he then felt safe from immediate pursuit. As he passed the house of Traquair he rode up and requested to speak to the Earl and his son, hoping, perhaps, that they might be able to dispel the suspicions of treachery to which Traquair's wavering conduct had given rise. He had recalled a fine troop of cavalry, commanded by his son, Lord Linton, late on the very night before the surprise, at a time when Montrose himself and the whole of his devoted band of followers were entirely ignorant of the impending danger.

Neither Traquair nor Linton appeared in answer to the demand of the King's Captain-General to see them, and the cavaliers rode on, convinced that their suspicions were well founded. It is vain to speculate upon what might have happened had Traquair given Montrose notice of Leslie's approach when he recalled his son, but, bearing in mind the retreat from Dundee, it is at least probable that with six hours' warning the great Marquis would have once more evaded the overwhelming force that threatened him, and have brought off his men in safety to the hills by the same route he followed in his own flight from the hopelessly unequal struggle on the banks of the Ettrick.

The sun was setting when the Royalists came in sight of the little town of Peebles, and Montrose, being joined by some of the scattered stragglers of his army, boldly marched into the town and rested there that night. Early next morning he crossed the Clyde and met, to his great joy, the Earls of Airlie and Crawford, who had escaped by a different route, and had picked up a considerable number of the fugitive horse on their way.

Neither of the royal standards fell into the hands of the Covenanters. One was saved by a brave Irish soldier, who in all the confusion of the battle-field stripped it from its staff, and wrapping it round his body under his clothing, forced his way through the enemy and brought it the same night to Montrose. The cavalry colours were preserved by the standard-bearer, William Hay, a brother of the Earl of



Kinnoul, and a faithful follower of the great Marquis through all his fortunes. This gallant young fellow escaped with the flag to England, where he remained for some time in hiding, and when the country became a little more settled he travelled in disguise through the Lowlands and restored the standard to his General.

The Covenanters made the most of their victory, and in their reports to the English Parliament greatly exaggerated the numbers of their opponents. Leslie himself wrote to the Earl of Leven that "all Montrose's forces which were Irish and Highlanders (were) killed upon the place, the strength of horse and dragoons were about two thousand, which are all fled several ways." Another printed report gives "three barons slain upon the place, two thousand five hundred killed upon the place, three hundred killed in pursuit, five hundred run to their own homes . . . one thousand seven hundred taken prisoner." "Montrose fled with not twenty men with him, two hundred Irish shot to death against posts after they were taken straggling in the country." \*

\* The last item is probably an allusion to the unfortunate Irish stragglers who were drowned at the Bridge of Linlithgow.

## CHAPTER XXV

### TROUBLES AFTER PHILIPHAUGH

"There's some ill planet reigns ;  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favourable."

*Winter's Tale.*

**September 1645** FEW of the combatants on either side were killed during the short and hopeless struggle at Philiphaugh. Most of the royalist cavalry escaped, with about half of the Irish infantry. Of the remaining half some were killed, and the rest, after a brave defence, surrendered. General Leslie himself having given them promise of quarter through their commander, Adjutant Stuart, they laid down their arms, and were marched from the entrenched position where they had fought into an open field. But the ministers who always accompanied a covenanting army were furious "that quarter should be given to such wretches, and declared it to be an act of sinful impiety to spare them." \* Argyll, Lanerick and Lauderdale had accompanied Leslie to Philiphaugh, and their influence was not likely to be exercised on the side of mercy. The General was accordingly induced to let loose the fanatical soldiers of the Covenant upon the defenceless prisoners, who were all cut to pieces where they stood.

David Leslie's conscience being a little uneasy, the ministers by a "vile equivocation" † explained away his promise for him by saying that it had been meant to apply only to Adjutant Stuart. This nice distinction, however, would not have saved Stuart from being hanged by the merciless tribunal of the Covenant had he not fortunately managed

\* Guthrie quoted by Napier. See also Wishart and Patrick Gordon.

† Gardiner's *Great Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 237.



to escape.\* Two Irish officers, Colonel O'Kyan, the young hero who drove back the enemy at Fyvie, and Major Lachlan, another brave man, much beloved by Montrose, were exempted from the general massacre, only to be immediately taken to Edinburgh, where they were hanged without trial, and for no other crime than that of fighting under the King's commission.

Almost all the women, children and servant boys who had followed the royal army fell into the hands of the enemy on this occasion, and they too were slaughtered with hideous barbarity. Baillie, the covenanting chronicler, records exultingly that above a thousand were buried in that place, men, women and children, and as comparatively few—not more than five hundred at the highest reckoning—fell in the battle, a large margin is left for these inoffensive victims of covenanting cruelty.

But besides those who were massacred at once upon the field, a considerable number of these unhappy creatures, who were captured by the country people while trying to make their escape, were brought to the Covenanters at Linlithgow. Among them were young children, and infants at their mothers' breasts, but they were all without exception ordered to be thrown headlong from a high bridge into the river beneath, and the cruel command was too faithfully executed. Soldiers armed with pikes stood on the banks, and when any of the victims succeeded in struggling to the shore they were met with savage blows and thrust back into the river to drown.

It would not be easy to find a parallel to this revolting scene, even amidst the horrors of the Irish insurrection and massacre of the Protestants in 1641, nor can the outrage committed by half-savage tribesmen, who had been accustomed from time immemorial to a life of rapine and violence, be fairly compared in atrocity to similar deeds of cruelty done by civilized Lowlanders, and—worst of all—by those who called themselves ministers of the Gospel of peace. If it

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, note, p. 144.

were not a common experience to see men attributing to their neighbours, instead of to themselves, their own most obvious and glaring faults, it would be surprising to find the very persons who were most deeply imbued with a cruel and revengeful spirit, calling Montrose a "cruel and inhuman butcher and murderer"—Montrose, who never, in the whole course of his campaign, allowed a prisoner to be injured or ill-treated, and who at this very time refused to retaliate in any way upon the Covenanters in his own power.

After Philiphaugh, many Royalists of rank, including some of Montrose's dearest and most valued friends, fell into the hands of General Leslie, and before the end of September they were taken to Glasgow, where the covenanting Parliament was then sitting. The prisoners were at once proceeded against in a "seeming legal way" (as Montrose once expressed it), and the leaders of the Kirk, seeing that there was some inclination to spare the lives of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen, presented a remonstrance from the Commission of the General Assembly, urging their immediate execution. Their bloodthirsty desire for vengeance upon the helpless prisoners was backed up by urgent petitions from several of the provincial synods, and the voice of clerical clamour so far prevailed that ten out of the twelve principal prisoners were condemned to death, though all had received promise of quarter.

Meanwhile Montrose had acted with his usual prompt decision. With the remnant of his army he had hastened into Athole, having first sent Lords Douglas and Airlie to raise as many men as they could in Angus, and Lord Erskine with a similar commission into Mar. The Marquis urgently pressed Colkitto to join him as soon as possible, and he also wrote to Lord Digby saying that if only a small body of cavalry were sent him from England he could and would carry through his work. He found his friends in Athole busy getting in their late harvest and repairing their ruined homes, but so great was his influence with them that four hundred of these loyal mountaineers left everything to follow him.



The accounts of the cruelties perpetrated by the Covenanters upon the helpless prisoners, men, women and children, who had fallen into their hands, stirred Montrose's deep indignation, and his fears for those brave and noble friends of his own, who were still in the power of their merciless enemies, urged him to ceaseless exertions for their relief. Crossing the Grampians by rapid marches, he hastened to Strathbogie, where he hoped, by his personal influence with Aboyne, to incite the Gordons to immediate action. The plan seemed to succeed. Aboyne, with his brother Lewis and one thousand eight hundred men, joined Montrose at Druminor Castle, and professed his readiness to put himself and his followers entirely at the command of the King's governor and captain-general in Scotland.

With reviving hopes the Marquis once more turned southwards. Expecting to be strengthened on his way by reinforcements from Mar and Angus, and later on by the Western Highlanders under Colkitto, he intended to cross the Forth, and felt confident that with such an army under his command he should be able to save his doomed friends at Glasgow. The mere report of his preparations had, in fact, caused the Covenanters to delay the execution of their prisoners.

But a cruel disappointment was again in store for him. Lord Lewis Gordon forsook the standard almost as soon as he had joined it, and on the third day's march Aboyne insisted on returning with all his followers, alleging that his father's commands were peremptory, and that his own estates in the north needed protection. Montrose used the strongest arguments he could think of to persuade his wayward ally not to forsake him at such a moment. He urged that on the first news of the advance of the royal standard, backed by an efficient force, the few troops the Covenanters had in Aberdeen would be summoned at once to the south. He reminded Aboyne of the prisoners—some of them Huntly's friends and connections—whose only chance of life lay in the decided and united action of the Royalists.

Aboyne had nothing to say in reply, and only requested

that the whole matter might be laid before his father. Montrose felt that the fate of his friends hung upon a thread, and every hour's delay added to his anxiety, but he controlled his impatience, and sent to Strathbogie young Irvine of Drum, Huntly's son-in-law, and Lord Reay, his intimate friend, in whose house he had lived concealed during all the stirring events of the past year. They found the chief of the Gordons inexorable. Lord Reay was too much ashamed of his ill-success to return and face his commander, but Irvine of Drum brought some ambiguous letters from his father-in-law, in obedience to which Aboyne and his forces withdrew, solemnly promising to return in less than a fortnight.

Vexed at having trifled away so much time to no purpose, Montrose marched into Perthshire, reinforcing his army on the road. There he met two officers who had come by different routes with a message from the King, desiring him to hasten if possible to the south to meet a body of English cavalry which Charles had sent to his assistance under the command of Lord Digby. Montrose sent on the two officers to Huntly and Aboyne, in the hope that the King's direct authority might induce his jealous allies to send up their force without delay, for without their help it was impossible to penetrate far into the Lowlands. But the attempt was a failure. Huntly treated the messengers with scant courtesy, and disregarding the promise of help from England, he told them that neither they nor the Marquis of Montrose knew half as much about the King's affairs as he did.

Montrose could not wait for the return of the messengers, for rumours reached him that the Covenanters were beginning to wreak their vengeance upon his friends who were in their power, and driven on by keen anxiety he hurried on towards Glasgow with what forces he could gather together.

The Covenanters had indeed discovered that he was not in a condition to make himself formidable, and they no longer delayed the execution of their prisoners. On the 25th of October Sir William Rollock, the Marquis's former



companion in his perilous journey in disguise through the Lowlands, was beheaded. The next day the gallant Alexander Ogilvie of Innerquharity—"a lovely young youth," as a Glasgow bailie who was present at the execution recorded—was brought to the scaffold, and with him suffered Sir Philip Nesbit, a cavalier who had served for some time in the King's army in England.

The fate of such a mere boy as Ogilvie excited the pity of some of the Covenanters, and there was much discussion upon the propriety of inflicting capital punishment on any of the Scottish or English prisoners. It was truly asserted that in England it was not the practice of either side to put to death prisoners of war, but the scruples of the more humane were overruled by the influence of the Kirk. The Royalists asserted that young Innerquharity was sacrificed to Argyll's implacable hatred of the Ogilvies, but if this was the case the enmity of the Campbells was well backed up by the fanaticism of the ministers. It was at the execution of this boy of eighteen that Mr David Dickson, the well-known minister, remarked triumphantly, "The wark gaes bonnily on," a phrase which soon passed into a sort of proverb among the Covenanters.

A letter, dated on the day of Sir William Rollock's execution, was written by Montrose to Robertson of Inver, his castellan at Blair Athole, commanding him to keep the prisoners committed to his charge "in most strict fermance," thus depriving them of the comparative liberty which had hitherto been allowed them. Evidently he felt that in holding these prisoners securely lay his chief, if not his only, hope of protection for those friends of his own who were now at the mercy of his enemies, but unhappily a considerable number of important prisoners had been recklessly set at liberty by Aboyne without any reference to his commander-in-chief. Moreover, Argyll knew from experience that Montrose was not likely to retaliate upon helpless captives, and he did not hesitate to take advantage of the generous scruples of his opponent.

The Covenanters, however, still feared Montrose, and a pause took place in the executions when he suddenly appeared south of the Forth with a force of fifteen hundred men, including only three hundred horse. It was a desperate venture to which his sorely troubled heart urged him, as the last hope of saving the lives of his friends, and for three months he continued to threaten Glasgow. He took up his headquarters at Buchanan, on the south-eastern shores of Loch Lomond,\* and appeared every day at the head of his cavalry within sight of the city. The Covenanters guarded Glasgow with a force of three thousand men, but they never once attempted to attack the cavaliers. The disproportion between the two forces was too great to allow any real chance of a rescue. Colkitto and his followers remained deaf to the summons of the governor. Aboyne, who had promised six weeks before to rejoin the royal standard in a fortnight, made no sign, and Lord Digby, the most brilliant, if also the most untrustworthy of English cavaliers, after penetrating a few miles into Scotland, was repulsed and took refuge in the Isle of Man.†

This last failure was a severe disappointment to the King, who had deprived himself of a larger number of troops than he could well spare, and who was by this time aware that his prospects in Scotland had been entirely overclouded by the fatal disaster at Philiphaugh. But this change of fortune only drew Charles's warm affections the closer to the one man who, beyond all others, had shown himself capable of unbounded self-sacrifice in the service of his king and country. In the negotiations at this time carried on by Montreuil, the French Ambassador, Charles spoke of Montrose "with unqualified praise." "From henceforth," he said, "I place Montrose among my children, and mean to live with him as a friend and not as a king."† He also refused to allow Will

\* The estate, which at that time belonged to Sir John Buchanan, a strong Covenanter, is now the property of the great Marquis's descendant, the Duke of Montrose.

† Gardiner, vol. ii. p. 387.



Murray to be employed in Scottish affairs, because he knew that Montrose disapproved of the man, and Montrose, he said, "was chiefly to be consulted in that business."

The following letter, written just at this time from Newark, came to Montrose in the midst of his troubles, and if it conveyed no good news it at least assured him of the warm sympathy and affection of his Sovereign at a moment when such sympathy was sorely needed.

"MONTROSE,—As it hath been none of my least afflictions nor misfortunes that you have had hitherto no assistance from me, so I conjure you to believe that nothing but impossibility hath been the cause of it. Witness my coming hither (not without some difficulty), being only for that end. And when I saw that I could not do, the parting with 1500 horse under the command of Digby, to send unto you ; and though the success (which I have ever since expected, and that with some inconvenience to my other affairs) hath not been in accordance with my wishes, yet that, nor nothing else, shall discourage me from seeking and laying hold on all occasions to assist you, it being the least part of that kindness I owe you for the eminent fidelity and generosity you have showed in my service. And be assured that your less prosperous fortune is so far from lessening my estimation of you, that it will rather cause my affection to kythe the closer to you. For by the grace of God, no hardness of condition shall ever make me shake in my friendship towards you, in despite of all the specious shows of cunning base propositions, to which, if there were nothing else, your letter to Digby of the 24th of September,\* which I have opened and read, is to me a sufficient antidote. I will now say no more, but that upon all occasions and in all fortunes you shall ever find me.—Your most assured, faithful, constant friend,

"CHARLES R."

It was the middle of November when Montrose at last turned northwards, and the winter, which was one of unusual severity, had already set in. Heartsick with bitter grief and disappointment, he retraced his steps through the Lennox and Menteith, and returned through the Pass of Leny over the snow-covered hills to Athole. There a new sorrow awaited him. His old friend and life-long counsellor, Lord Napier, had died at Fincastle during his absence. The good old man had been ill for some weeks, and the Marquis had left him in the care of his daughter, the gentle Lady of

\* This letter must have given an account of the disaster at Philiphaugh, and was probably written from the neighbourhood of Glen Almond.

Keir. The sad event was probably not unexpected; still, the loss of one whom he had always loved and revered as a father was a heavy addition to all those other troubles which pressed upon Montrose at this time. He buried his old friend with all honour in the Kirk of Blair, and as he lingered over Lord Napier's peaceful grave he may well have longed to be himself "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

Either before or immediately after Lord Napier's death Montrose lost his wife. He came to Montrose to bury her, at some risk to himself, it would seem, for the Glasgow bailie who alone records the fact adds that "he was pursued back again by Lieutenant-General Middleton."

Absolutely nothing is known about the life of Magdalen Carnegie, the "sweet wife" for whose sake (as well as for the King's) Montrose's friends adjured him on the bloody field of Philiphaugh not to throw away his life. Her early marriage, an ordinance of the Committee of Estates in 1645, consigning to her care her youngest son, Robert Grahame—a child of four years old—and six months later her death; these scant facts comprise the whole known record of her existence. There was no personal estrangement between Montrose and his wife's family, though they were on different sides in politics. With his brother-in-law, Lord Carnegie, he was on very friendly terms, but the Earl of Southesk, who had opposed the Covenant in its earlier days, changed places with his son-in-law when the party became all-powerful in Scotland. He joined the Covenanters, though only, it would seem, for "the saving of his estates," just when Montrose came forward to defend the falling monarchy.

As the Marchioness was not in any way interfered with when the other ladies of Montrose's family were persecuted and imprisoned, it is more than probable that she had remained with her father, and that his adhesion to the ruling powers protected her from molestation. For the last two years she could not have seen anything of her husband, and



it is impossible now to conjecture what were his feelings as he stood by the grave of his first and—as far as can be gathered—his only love. More than one love he could hardly have had who wrote, in his strange, half-mystical love-song:

“The golden laws of love shall be  
 Upon this pillar hung,  
 A single eye, a simple heart,  
 A true and constant tongue:  
 Let no man for more hearts pretend  
 Than he has hearts in store;  
 True love begun shall never end,  
 Love one, and love no more.”

Brief indeed was the space that could be spared for mourning, and Montrose, galloping back from the hurried funeral rites, with the covenanting troopers at his heels, quickly regained the shelter of the friendly mountains, not to brood over the cloud of troubles that darkened this blackest winter of his life, but to take up with undiminished energy the pressing duties of his position. He began at once to stir up the loyal men of Athole to fresh activity in the King's service, and while he raised new levies he arranged with his usual care for the quartering of his troops, so as to guard against any unnecessary burden upon the inhabitants.

The one great difficulty that stood in the way of success was Huntly's obstinate opposition. The short-sighted and selfish policy of this powerful nobleman was in truth more fatal to the royal cause than were all the armies of the Covenant. To overcome this obstacle became for the time the one aim towards the accomplishment of which Montrose bent all his energy, and his first step was to send Sir John Dalziel to Huntly with a letter which contained the following dignified and stern rebuke:

“I hope I need not inculcate to your remembrance the danger the King and kingdom at present are in, and the misery that hangs over his and every faithful subject's head. Blame me not, my Lord, if I can

lay the fault on none but yourself and your son ; first for hindering the supplies which the King sent,\* and next for the loss of those gallant and faithful men, lately with so much cruelty butchered. Yet nevertheless, since things past cannot be recalled, I beseech you to recollect yourself for the future, and if you will not assist, yet at least grant the favour of a conference to the King's governor.

“ MONTROSE.”

This strong temperate letter produced no effect, and Huntly refused point blank to meet the Marquis. Montrose, however, constant to his one great object, and ready to overlook all slights and affronts to himself, was firmly resolved to bring about the interview which Huntly was determined not to grant. In the middle of December, therefore, he marched his small army over the frozen snow which lay deep in the precipitous passes of the Grampians, and came so suddenly to Strathbogie that he had nearly attained his object. But Huntly, on the first notice of the governor's approach, instantly mounted his horse and rode off, with as much speed as if he were pursued by the enemy, to his other and less accessible castle on the banks of the Spey.

There he thought himself safe, but Montrose was not to be evaded. Leaving his followers behind, and attended only by two or three of his friends, he set off late at night from Strathbogie and arrived at the Bog of Gicht so early in the morning that Huntly could neither conceal himself nor escape. Judging by the result it would appear that Huntly had been flying from the governor because he knew that he could not resist Montrose's strange power of personal attraction. Once in the presence of this dreaded rival all his jealous fears took flight. Like Saul listening to the soothing tones of David's harp, the morose and gloomy chief of the Gordons softened and unbent beneath the winning courtesy of the man whom he had too long regarded with suspicion and dislike, and Montrose thought he had at last gained his point.

All that he asked for Huntly promised him; the un-

\* This is in allusion to the wholesale desertion of the Gordon cavalry which prevented Montrose from penetrating to the south of Scotland and joining with Lord Digby on the Borders.



checked assistance of his brave clan and his own personal co-operation. The loyal Gordons welcomed with delight the apparent change in their chief, and Montrose departed with a lightened heart and with brighter hopes for the future, hopes that unhappily were not destined to be fulfilled.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### EXECUTION OF MONTROSE'S FRIENDS

"There is a victory in dying well  
For freedom,—and ye have not died in vain ;  
What though your cause be baffled, freeman cast  
In dungeons, dragged to death, or forced to flee ;  
Hope is not withered in affliction's blast—  
The patriot's blood's the seed of Freedom's tree."

CAMPBELL.

**Nov. 26, 1645** MONTROSE had hardly ceased to threaten Glasgow before the covenanting Parliament assembled in security at St Andrews, whither they had removed all their prisoners of importance. And now again arose the savage cry for blood. Standing up in his place and calling upon the House to do justice on "delinquents" and "malignants," Sir Archibald Johnston, in a fanatical speech, urged the immediate execution of all the royalist prisoners taken under promise of quarter. His appeal was solemnly seconded by the leading ministers of the Kirk, and several of them did not scruple to pervert the words of Holy Scripture itself and to use them—as did Mr Robert Blair in the sermon he preached at the opening of the session—as a means of rousing in their hearers the desire for vengeance upon the helpless captives.

**Dec. 5, 1645** Under the guidance of the ministers, petitions were framed pressing the Parliament to "execute justice" on the prisoners. These petitions set forth "how displeasing unto the supreme Judge of the world, how grievous unto the hearts of the Lord's people the former delays" had been, and insisted that "the Lord called for blood at their hands."\* Kilsyth was singled out as an occasion deserving of special vengeance. Judging from the language of the Remonstrance put forth by the Commission of the General Assembly, and

\* "Four Petitions from the Kirk against the lives of the prisoners," *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 245.



of the Synodal petitions that followed, every covenanting soldier who fell in battle was to be looked upon as an inoffensive citizen cruelly murdered. This perverted idea of fair and open warfare arose from their unwarrantable assumption that they and their own narrow sect were the saints, the Lord's people, who alone could claim rights of any kind—civil or religious. Like the Fifth Monarchy men of their own time, or the followers of the Mahdi in ours, they held that all who opposed them were the enemies of God, and to show mercy to the enemies of God was treason and impiety.

In this spirit the so-called Parliament at St Andrews thankfully acknowledged the "just and pious desires" of the petitioners, and the president, Lord Lindsay, ended his reply to the representatives of the General Assembly by entreating them, "in the name of the House, that they would be earnest with God to implore and beg his blessing to encourage them to the performance of what they demanded," namely, the execution of the prisoners of war taken under promise of quarter. So convinced were the majority in the House that future generations would approve and admire the blood-thirsty spirit of the petitions that they ordered these documents to be carefully lodged in the national archives as a "record to posterity" of the zeal and piety of the covenanting Kirk.

The vengeance so strenuously sought for began a day or two before Christmas—a festival rigorously proscribed by the Covenanters—when "the House ordained the Irish prisoners taken at or after Philiphaugh, in all the prisons of the kingdom, to be executed without any assize or process." To the noblemen and gentlemen imprisoned in the Castle of St Andrews some show of trial was granted, but they petitioned in vain to be judged, not by a committee, but by their peers, by the Justice-General, or by the whole Parliament. Before the illegal tribunal, which constituted itself at once accuser and judge, the prisoners not only asserted their innocence, but pleaded that they had surrendered upon promise of quarter. Several of the covenanting lords ex-

pressed scruples "anent the point of quarter," but the plea was, after some debate, disallowed, and sentence of death was passed upon all, with the sole exception of Lord Hartfell.

Before the removal of the prisoners to St Andrews, Adjutant Stewart had been fortunate enough to effect his escape, and now another and more important royalist succeeded in eluding the vengeance of the Covenanters. This was Lord Ogilvie, who, after enjoying only three short weeks of liberty, had been retaken at the rout of Philiphaugh. Argyll's enmity to his family was alone sufficient to seal his fate, but he was connected on the mother's side with the Hamiltons, and through their powerful influence he obtained permission to receive a farewell visit from his mother, wife and sister, the very day before that fixed for his execution.

It was late in the winter afternoon when the ladies were admitted into the castle, and the guards who kept watch in Lord Ogilvie's chamber respectfully withdrew. Their absence made it possible to carry out a plan which had been arranged beforehand. The young nobleman, who, for the furthering of the scheme, was feigning indisposition, disguised himself in his sister's clothes, and she, drawing his night-cap over her head, took his place in bed. At eight o'clock the ladies, who seemed overcome with grief, were ushered out by torchlight, and the guards, unconscious of the important exchange that had been effected, permitted the whole party to pass out unchallenged. Horses were waiting just outside the town, and before daybreak Lord Ogilvie was safe from pursuit.

Next morning his escape was discovered, and the loss of his intended victim so enraged Argyll that the ladies were only saved from punishment by the exertions, in their behalf, of their covenanting relations, the Earl of Lanerick and Lord Lindsay. Determined, if possible, to recover their prey, the Committee of Estates offered the enormous reward of a thousand pounds sterling—equivalent at that date in Scotland to about £10,000 of our present money—to anyone who would bring in the heir of the Ogilvies, alive or dead; but in



spite of all their efforts he succeeded in keeping out of their clutches.

All the remaining prisoners, Colonel Nathaniel Gordon, Jan. 16, Sir Robert Spottiswoode, Captain Andrew Guthrie—a son of 1646 the Bishop of Moray—and William Murray, a brother of the covenanting Earl of Tullibardine, were condemned to be beheaded at the Cross of St Andrews on Tuesday, the 20th of January 1646. But the execution of William Murray was delayed for two days on account of a plea entered by his brother at the last moment. Tullibardine, whose cold-hearted indifference to the fate of his young and only brother was censured even by the Covenanters themselves, came forward at last to urge that Murray was under age and *non compos mentis*. The first plea was true enough, but the second was false, and the brave boy would not condescend to purchase his life by an unworthy subterfuge. He ascended the scaffold with the greatest calmness and fortitude, and his last words left a deep impression on the crowd who came to see him die.

Raising his voice, so that some of the bystanders could hear him, he said: "My countrymen, account this a new honour and distinction for the house of Tullibardine, and the whole clan of Murray, that a youth of that ancient race, in the flower of his age, willingly and gladly yields his soul, as far as man can take it, for his King, the father of his country and the generous patron of our family. Let not my honoured mother, my dearest sisters, my kin and friends lament my brief life. It has been long enough for me to die with honour."\*

Colonel Nathaniel Gordon and Captain Guthrie, both of them brave and distinguished soldiers, behaved on the scaffold with the undaunted courage that had characterized them through life, and rejoiced in being called to suffer in so just a cause.

But it was the execution of Sir Robert Spottiswoode which produced the greatest impression on the country and

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 172.

caused the deepest sorrow to Montrose. The spotless character of the "Good President," as he was often called, and the justice and mercy of his rule whilst he held the office of Chief Judge of Scotland, had earned for him the love and reverence of the whole kingdom. He had not even borne arms against the Covenanters, and as he had only joined Montrose about ten days before Philiphaugh he could not be accused of taking part in the "massacre" of Kilsyth, as the Scottish rebels chose to term their most signal defeat. But when Lanerick fled from Oxford and deserted to the Covenanters (December 1643) Sir Robert had succeeded him as Secretary of State for Scotland, and in that capacity he had signed the King's last commission to Montrose, and had put his name to the Proclamation for calling a Parliament, which was one of the first acts of the Marquis on receiving his appointment as governor. The Covenanters knew perfectly well that all these things were done in obedience to the commands of the Sovereign whom they, as well as Spottiswoode, acknowledged as their lawful King, and they did not venture to accuse him of treason in the sense in which it had always been understood. They therefore pronounced him guilty of "treason to the Estates," a crime of their own invention, to which they adjudged the punishment of death.

Sir Robert, intending to address the people from the scaffold, had prepared a speech in which he ably vindicated the King's policy of self-defence in Scotland, and the manner in which "that matchless mirror of all true worth and nobility, the Lord Marquis of Montrose," had carried out the commission entrusted to him. He declared that ever since he had been honoured by Montrose's acquaintance he had approved and favoured his designs, knowing them to be both loyal and honourable. The speech ended by drawing attention to the mischievous part played in the troubles by the clerical politicians of the age. God, he said, had put a lying spirit into the mouth of their prophets, and he prayed that his oppressed countrymen might be relieved from the intolerable servitude under which they lay.



This appeal to the better feelings of his fellow-Scotsmen he was not allowed to deliver, for the rulers, fearing the effect upon the people of such words from one whom they had long been accustomed to venerate, imposed silence upon him, but he flung his manuscript into the crowd and it fell into the hands of friends. Sir Robert died with Christian courage and resignation, and although his enemies were perhaps too much blinded by prejudice to discern the fact, the spectacle of such a death could not, and did not, fail to make upon the nobler minds among the lookers-on a deeper impression in favour of the royal cause than any mere words could have effected. His wisdom and learning were famous throughout Scotland, and Wishart describes him as a man singularly consistent and even-tempered, one whose youth had no cause to blush for his boyhood, nor his mature age to be ashamed of his youth.

The day before his execution he wrote the following letter to Montrose:

"MY NOBLE LORD,—You will be pleased to accept this last tribute of my service, this people having condemned me to die for my loyalty to His Majesty and the respect I am known to carry towards your Excellence, which I believe hath been the greater cause of the two of my undoing. Always, however, I hope by the assistance of God's grace to do more good to the King's cause and to the advancement of the service your Excellence hath in hand by my death than perhaps I otherwise should have done, being living. For all the rubs and discouragements I perceive your Excellence hath had of late, I trust you will not be disheartened to go on and crown that work you did so gloriously begin, and had achieved so happily, if you had not been deserted in the nick. In the end God will surely set up his own anointed, and, as I have been confident from the beginning, make your Excellence a prime instrument of it.

"One thing I must humbly recommend to your Excellence, that as you have done always hitherto, so you will continue by fair and gentle carriage, to gain the people's affection to their Prince, rather than to imitate the barbarous inhumanity of your adversaries, although they give your Excellence too great provocations to follow their example.

"Now for my last request. In hope that the poor service I could do hath been acceptable to your Excellence, let me be bold to recommend the care of my orphans to you, that when God shall be pleased to settle His Majesty in peace, your Excellence will be a remembrance to him in their behalf, as also in behalf of my brother's house that hath been and is mightily oppressed for the same respect. Thus being forced to part with your Excellence, as I have lived, so I die.—Your Excellency's most humble and faithful servant,

"RO. SPOTTISWOODE."

When this pathetic and high-souled letter reached Montrose he was camping with a small number of his faithful men of Athole amid the winter snows in a desolate valley between the Spey and the Findhorn, hoping against hope for the support of the Gordons, and writing letter after letter to their jealous chieftain \* to persuade him to give up the petty warfare in which he was engaged on his own account and to co-operate heartily with himself and the other Royalists. Sir Robert had not over-rated the magnanimity of the great Marquis when, with almost his last breath, he entreated him not to be provoked to any unworthy act of revenge by the barbarity of his enemies.

The officers and men who still clung to Montrose were wild with anger at the cruel fate of so many brave and loyal men, and urged him, with strong and earnest importunity, to retaliate upon his prisoners the treatment their own friends and relations had suffered at the hands of the Covenanters. They insisted that such a revenge was not only lawful but necessary to prevent a repetition of such outrages.

Patiently listening to their indignant remonstrances, Montrose expressed his heartfelt sympathy with their natural and righteous anger at the inhumanity of their enemies, but he pointed out to them that, as brave and good men, they could not imitate the very iniquities against which they were protesting. He told them how unjust it would be to punish the innocent for crimes committed by others. He reminded them that these prisoners had received promise of quarter, and that to men of honour a promise—even to an enemy—must always be held sacred. The barbarity of the Covenanters should, he said, be no example to him, and if the meanest soldier in his army gave quarter to their general it should be religiously observed.

“Doubt not,” he continued, “that a time will come when these rebellious subjects will have to answer for their iniquities to the just God and to the King. And meanwhile,

\* Many of these letters have been preserved, and they exemplify in a striking manner the patience and courtesy, the determination neither to give nor take offence which characterized Montrose.



let them set a price upon our heads, let them hire assassins, employ cut-throats and break their plighted faith! Never shall they induce us to rival their crimes or seek to outdo them except in valour and renown.”\*

Montrose's grief at the loss of his friends was embittered by the consciousness that, but for the defection of the Gordons, he could have rescued them, but no touch of shame or remorse visited Huntly. Many of his clansmen expressed in the strongest terms their disapprobation of his almost insane jealousy and their earnest desire to serve under Montrose, but so great was the power of the chief over the leading members of his clan that few of them could venture to act in downright opposition to his commands.

Huntly's conduct was the more vexatious at this time because several noblemen and gentlemen who commanded large followings in the north—chief among whom was the Earl of Seaforth—were now inclined to declare for the King. But the persistent refusal of the powerful chief of the Gordons to unite his forces with those of the Captain-General so dispirited them that many who had already joined the standard began to withdraw.

Montrose would not remain any longer inactive. The worst of the winter was over, and with the small force he had at his command he besieged Inverness, which was not strongly garrisoned. Middleton, with about 1400 men, was eighty miles away, and Montrose sent to Huntly, who, with a considerable body of his well-armed clansmen, lay between him and the enemy, begging him, if he would not help him to invest Inverness at least to keep Middleton from crossing the Spey. Huntly's answer was so unsatisfactory that Montrose sent two of his own troops of horses with orders to keep watch at the fords of the Spey and to give him prompt notice of the enemy's approach if he should venture to cross in spite of the Gordons.

Lord Lewis, the most untrustworthy of his family, had more than once disconcerted Montrose's best-laid plans by

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 175.

his faithless and slippery conduct, and he was now in command of a Gordon garrison at Rothes Castle, on the banks of the Spey. He was much under the influence of Argyll, and on this occasion he played a trick that was worthy of his covenanting kinsman. He sent an invitation to Montrose's two captains and their men, assuring them that Middleton was far enough away, and that they might safely leave their posts to make merry for a night with him and his friends. They were foolish enough to fall into the trap, and while they were feasting with the Gordons, the covenanting army crossed the Spey and marched rapidly towards Inverness. Lord Lewis, thinking his treacherous purpose was accomplished, dismissed his guests with a taunt, telling them to "go to their general, who would have hotter work now than when he was beaten at Selkirk."\*

By riding with great speed the officers succeeded in reaching Inverness just before Middleton's army came in sight, and they found that Montrose had fortunately received warning of his approach. As he had hardly any cavalry he could not venture upon an engagement on the plain, and after a slight skirmish he fell back upon the mountains, and marching through Strath Eirich he reached the safe solitudes of the Spey.

One more effort he made to bring Huntly to reason. It was by this time the end of May, and taking with him only one troop of horse he galloped over to the gloomy and nearly inaccessible castle in the Bog of Gicht, twenty miles distant. When near the end of his journey, he sent on a fleet messenger to inform Huntly that he was coming to consult him on urgent business, and to lay before him letters he had lately received from the King from Oxford. Huntly dared not face him, and his only answer was to spring on his horse and ride away, so that when Montrose arrived he had to turn away from the inhospitable gates and ride the twenty miles back again. It was the last time. The two men, who were such a contrast one to the other, never met again.

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 178, and note 7.



A few weeks before this disheartening failure, the young Lord Napier and his cousin, Drummond of Balloch, had quitted Montrose for the purpose of taking measures to protect their property in Menteith, which was being wasted and destroyed by Argyll's troops. Whilst absent on this expedition the two young men, with about fifty soldiers, were besieged in Montrose's castle of Kincardine by General Middleton, who was then on his way to the north.

For fourteen days they held out gallantly against the artillery of the enemy, but at the end of that time their well failed them and surrender became inevitable. Napier and his friend knew that if they fell into the hands of the Covenanters they could expect no mercy, and with the assistance of a faithful page named John Grahame they made their escape at night through a small postern, and passing through the midst of their enemies, under cover of darkness, succeeded in returning to the Marquis.

Next morning the little garrison capitulated and twelve of them were at once shot, the rest being sent prisoners to Edinburgh. The fine old castle, endeared to Montrose by many happy memories, was burnt to the ground, and with his old home there probably perished many letters and records which, had they been preserved, might have thrown some light upon the details of the Great Marquis's domestic life.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE KING A PRISONER AND MONTROSE'S FORCES DISBANDED

"There came a tyrant, and with holy glee  
Thou fought'st against him—but hast vainly striven ;  
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven  
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee."

WORDSWORTH.

**1646** WHILE Montrose, still hopeful and undaunted, in spite of all "rubs and discouragements," was seeking in all possible ways to strengthen his little army, and making ready for another campaign, events were taking place in England which entirely changed the aspect of affairs.

In April 1646 the King found himself shut up in Oxford, and there seemed every probability that he would be taken prisoner by the army of General Fairfax, which was within a few days' march of the city. The one thing Charles dreaded above all others was to fall into the hands of the Independents, who professed no respect for monarchy in general or for his person in particular. In this strait he turned to his own countrymen, who, in their most rebellious actions, had never ceased to assert their attachment to his person and their loyalty to his throne. Through M. de Montreuil, the resident French envoy, he treated privately with the leaders of the Scottish army in England, and one of the principal conditions that he tried to obtain was that the covenanting forces should unite with those who followed Montrose.

That the King should have entertained such an idea shows him to have been—as he was likely to be—entirely unacquainted with the state of feeling in Scotland. The leading Covenanters fiercely hated Montrose, as the leading members of the English Parliament had fiercely hated the Earl of Strafford. They considered that Montrose had de-



sented them, though in truth it was they who had deserted him, when they substituted a rebellious and aggressive league with the King's declared enemies in England, for a Covenant which professed only to defend the liberties of their own kirk and country, together with the rights of their sovereign. This plain truth, however, the Covenanters did not recognise, and their anger against Montrose as a supposed deserter from the "Cause" was heightened to frenzy by his extraordinary success in arms against them. Argyll and the small junta of nobles and clerics which, together with him, ruled Scotland at this time, feared and hated him to such a degree that they would have consented to the destruction of Charles and every member of his family before they would have agreed to the conditions which the King proposed.

Montreuil's negotiation was only partially successful. The Scottish Commissioners were too cautious to do more than give a verbal assent to four written conditions, which provided that they should secure the King in his person and honour, that they should not force him to do anything contrary to his conscience, and that they should take his part and protect his friends against the English Parliament, if it refused to restore his rights. Under these circumstances the French envoy advised the King not to place himself in the hands of the Scots if he could find any other way of escape, but he assured him that with them he would at least be secure from his English enemies. For some time the unfortunate King could not make his choice between the evils that beset him on both sides, and it was only four days before the investment of Oxford by Fairfax that he left the city in disguise. Even then he had not come to a final decision, and he lingered on his way to the north at several places where he hoped to gain information of Montrose's condition and to find some means to join him. But the difficulties in the way of such a scheme were insurmountable, and Charles at last resolved to throw himself upon the generosity of his countrymen.

Early in the morning of the 5th of May the fallen monarch

presented himself in the Presbyterian camp at Newark and demanded to see the Earl of Leven. That "little old crooked soldier" appeared greatly confounded and taken by surprise, though he could not have been altogether unprepared for the King's appearance, and he at once summoned to his aid the committee which formed so essential a part of every covenanting organization.

The poor King met with a sorry reception. "Before he had either drunk, reposed or refreshed himself," writes Sir James Turner, who was at that time an officer in the Scottish army, Lord Lothian, the President of the committee, "imperiously desired His Majesty to command my Lord Bellasis to deliver up Newark to the besieging parliamentary forces, to sign the Covenant, and to command James Graham—for so he called great Montrose—to lay down arms; all which the King stoutly refused, telling him that he who had made him an Earl had made James Graham a Marquis."

Charles soon discovered that he was as much a prisoner in the Scottish camp as he would have been had he fallen into the hands of Cromwell or Fairfax. He was compelled to order the surrender of Newark, and a few days later he wrote the following letter to Montrose, dated at Newcastle, 19th May 1646:

"MONTROSE,—I am in such a condition as is much fitter for relation than writing, wherefore I refer you to this trusty bearer, Robin Ker, for the reasons and manner of my coming to this army, as also what my treatment hath been since I came, and my resolutions upon my whole business. This shall therefore only give you positive commands, and tell you real truths, leaving the why of all this to the bearer. You must disband your forces and go into France, where you shall receive my further directions. This at first may justly startle you, but I assure you that if for the present I should offer to do more for you, I could not do so much, and that you shall always find me your most assured, constant, real and faithful friend,

CHARLES R."

This letter reached Montrose on the last day of May, three days after his fruitless forty miles' ride in search of Huntly. The news that the King was already in the hands of his deadliest foes was inexpressibly bitter to him, and the directions conveyed in the letter made his own course of action extremely perplexing. It was clear to him that the



King was acting under compulsion in ordering him to disband, and nothing could be more certain than that if his faithful and loyal followers were to lay down their arms unconditionally, no mercy would be shown them by the Covenanters. And yet if he refused to obey he would lay himself open to the charge of rebellion.

The Marquis therefore called a council of his principal officers and laid before them the King's letter. He sent a courteous invitation to Huntly to join in the conference, and even offered that it should be held in his own castle, but Huntly, as usual, returned a surly answer. After the council Montrose answered the King's letter, and represented in the plainest terms the dangers that would be incurred by "the brave and loyal men who had spent their blood and all that they held most dear for his sake," if they were to lay down their arms unconditionally, and he suggested certain provisions for their safety. He ended his letter thus:

June 2

"As for my own leaving the kingdom, I shall in all humility and obedience endeavour to perform Your Majesty's command; wishing rather than any shall make pretext of me, never to see it again with mine eyes; willing as well by passion as by action to witness myself—Your Majesty's most humble and most faithful servant,

"MONTROSE."

Together with this letter the Marquis sent a private message to Charles, begging to know if he was only acting under compulsion, and expressing his own willingness to encounter any risk in carrying out the King's wishes. In order, no doubt, to get a more speedy answer to these proposals, he broke up his camp in the valley of the Spey, and crossing the Grampians took up a station in Glenshee. Here he soon received an answer, in which Charles renewed his former directions. He still required Montrose to leave the kingdom, but promised that steps should be taken at once to secure the lives and property of his loyal adherents.

Conditions of surrender offered by the leaders of the Covenant accompanied the King's letter. But to these Montrose returned answer that as he had taken up arms under the commission and by the desire of His Majesty he would re-

ceive conditions for laying them down from no one but himself. In return Charles wrote the following pathetic letter to his faithful and devoted general:

July 16 "MONTROSE,—The most sensible part of my misfortunes is to see my friends in distress and not to be able to help them, and of this you are the chief. Wherefore, according to that real freedom and friendship which is between us, as I cannot absolutely command you to accept of unhandsome conditions, so I must tell you that I believe your refusal will put you in a far worse state than your compliance will. This is the reason that I have told this bearer Robin Ker, and the Commissioners here, that I have commanded you to accept Middleton's conditions, which really I judge to be your best course according to this present time. For if this opportunity be let slip, you must not expect any more treaties. In which case you must either conquer all Scotland or be inevitably ruined. That you may make the clearer judgment what to do, I have sent you here enclosed the Chancellor's answer to your demands. Whereupon, if you find it fit to accept, you may justly say I have commanded you, and if you take another course you cannot expect that I can publicly avow you in it until I shall be able (which God knows how soon that may be) to stand upon my own feet; but on the contrary seem not to be well satisfied with your refusal, which I find clearly will bring all this army upon you—and then I shall be in a very sad condition, such as I shall rather leave to your judgment than seek to express. However, you shall always find me,—Your most assured, real, faithful, constant friend,

CHARLES R.

"NEWCASTLE, 16th July 1646."

This letter dispelled Montrose's doubts, and within two or three days after receiving it he obtained an interview with General Middleton, and settled with him the conditions on which he would lay down his arms and retire from the country. The conference between the two generals, each bringing a single attendant to hold his horse, was held on the banks of the River Isla, and lasted two hours. Montrose agreed to accept the following terms. He himself, Lord Crawford and Sir John Hurrie (who had changed sides and joined Montrose before Kilsyth), being excluded from all grace or pardon, were to leave the kingdom before the first of September, in a vessel to be provided by the Estates. All other Royalists were to be allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of their personal freedom and property.

The committee of the Kirk, who represented the Argyll faction, were highly dissatisfied with these conditions, and declared them contrary to the Covenant. But Middleton was an honourable man, and he persisted in standing to his



engagements. Montrose's estates had long before this been confiscated by his enemies, and his barony of Mugdock, in the district of Loch Lomond, had been transferred by Argyll to himself.

On one of the last days of July Montrose assembled his **July 30** little army at Rattray, near Blairgowrie, to bid them a long farewell. He explained to them that he made this submission only for the sake of the King's safety, and he did his best to cheer and encourage them with the prospect of peace. But it was a sad and sorrowful parting, both to himself and to his brave and faithful followers, who were all enthusiastically attached to their great commander. For two eventful years he had shared, with the meanest of his soldiers, the greatest hardships of his extraordinary campaigns, and had endeared himself to them by his never-failing sympathy in their concerns, and by his warm appreciation of their good qualities. They knew that he could be trusted never to forget their interests in any selfish desire for his own advantage, and many of them now entreated to be allowed to accompany him in his exile, declaring that with him they would go to any corner of the world, and that they wished for nothing but to live and die under his command.

Deeply touched as he was by the affectionate devotion of his loyal Highlanders, Montrose would not consent to involve them in the chances of his own uncertain fortunes, and he selected as his companions only a few who were so obnoxious to the Covenanters that to take them with him was the only way to save them from persecution. Among these were Dr Wishart, John Spottiswoode, one of those nephews whom Sir Robert had bequeathed to his special care, and a faithful French servant named Pardus Lasound, who was a link with another of his lost friends, as he had been a personal attendant of Lord Gordon.

There still remained a month to the first of September, after which Montrose would be a proscribed man in his native land, but to avoid all cause of complaint he repaired at once to the port of Montrose, where he was to embark.

The cheerful little town, standing on its green and level peninsula, with its broad, circular basin of tidal water on one side and the waves of the North Sea on the other, had been from his earliest boyhood familiar ground to Montrose, and two miles off stood his house of Auld Montrose, deeply embosomed in great yews and chestnut trees. These last days were not, however, given to fond memories of a happy past, but were spent in an active attempt to organize among the nobles and gentlemen of the north, with whom his influence was still great, a party for the King which might be useful after the Marquis himself had left the country.

An affectionate letter from Charles, beginning, "MONTROSE,—in all kinds of fortunes you find a way more and more to oblige me," seems to show that the King was not unacquainted with the loyal efforts of his untiring champion. He added as a postscript to this letter, which was dated 25th August, the words, "Defer your going beyond seas as long as you may without breaking your word." All these letters clearly show how warmly Charles appreciated the self-sacrificing loyalty of his "hero cavalier," and how deeply he esteemed the chivalrous purity of Montrose's motives.

The month of August was nearly at an end and still the Covenanters showed no sign that they meant to fulfil their part of the contract. But on the 31st, the last day Montrose could safely remain in Scotland, a small ship entered the harbour and turned out to be the one provided by the Estates. The master of the ship was a fanatical Covenanter, the crew was composed of "sullen, sour-visaged, scowling fellows,"\* and when Montrose offered to go on board, the captain declared that he could not put to sea for some days. The whole thing began to look very much like a scheme to inveigle Montrose into staying in Scotland beyond the specified time, and to throw him into the hands of his enemies. He was the more inclined to suspect such a design as there were several English men-of-war cruising about the coast, and his suspicions were confirmed when some of the Cove-

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 186.



nanters who were friendly to him privately warned him that his escape to France or Belgium was rendered almost impossible by the presence of the hostile ships.

He therefore lost no time in providing for his own safety **Sept. 3** and that of his friends, and was fortunate enough to discover, in the harbour of Stonehaven, a small bark hailing from Bergen in Norway. The master, Jens Gunnersen, readily agreed to take on board the friends and servants of Montrose, and the Marquis himself, disguised as the servant of a clergyman named Wood, escaped in a small cock-boat, which took him the same evening to the Norwegian vessel. He was thirty-three years old when he left Scotland.

Montrose's devoted friend and nephew, the young Lord Napier, availed himself of the protection gained for him by his uncle to stay for a short time in Scotland to settle his affairs. He was not allowed, however, to escape a heavy penalty. The Estates had instituted a process for raising the body of his father, the good old Lord Napier, from his quiet grave in Blair Athole, for the purpose of passing forfeiture upon his bones, and in order to prevent this savage purpose from being carried out his son had to pay a large sum of money. He was also fined £2000 for his escape to Montrose before the battle of Auldearn, though at the time it happened his father had paid £900 on this account. These demands were at last settled, and finding that he could leave his wife, Lady Elizabeth, with his young children in comparative security in the old home at Merchiston, he followed his uncle abroad, not without incurring the reproaches of his covenanting relations for "the preposterous love he bore" to Montrose. His sister, the Lady of Keir, with her husband, Sir George Stirling, who were both strongly attached to the Marquis, left Scotland soon afterwards and joined his little circle of devoted friends.

The success of Montrose in securing good terms for his followers caused great heart-burnings among the stricter Covenanters, represented by Archibald Johnston; and the Commissioners of the General Assembly—a body which had

sprung up during the civil commotion, and had distinguished itself by the severe use it made of its usurped authority—set to work at once to find out and punish those of their fellow-countrymen who had performed any friendly office for Montrose. The heaviest chastisement fell upon the unfortunate ministers who had erred in this manner, and who could be evicted from their homes and parishes by a word from the Commissioners.

A Mr John Cheyne, minister of Kintore, was summarily deposed from his office for having “joined in acts of worship” with Montrose and Huntly by “saying grace over their meatt,” and his never having left his house when the “rebels” were in those parts was accounted sufficient evidence that he had corresponded with them, though only a small minority of the ministers seem to have deserted their parishes on the approach of the Royalists. A minister in the Mearns, a district in which Montrose had been known to all the inhabitants from his childhood, was placed under “the highest censure of the Church” because he had given the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to “that excommunicate rebel, James Graham.” The poor man was commanded to acknowledge his “heinous offence,” in sackcloth, publicly before the congregation, and to give under his own hand a written confession of his sin. He seems to have complied with the Commissioners’ orders, but he was expelled from his parish, and a year later was in such a destitute condition that the Presbytery of the Mearns was recommended to give him charity to save him and his family from starvation.

One faithful royalist, Gilbert Gordon by name, gave mortal offence to the Commissioners by publishing a “Panegyric on the Great Marquis,” in which he not only commended Montrose throughout the whole paper for his justice and valour, but to the inexpressible horror of the Commissioners applied to him the words of the 45th Psalm: “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” “And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because



of truth and meekness and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things."

This venturesome enthusiast was at one time in the clutches of the Covenanters, and like Sir Robert Spottiswoode, he would doubtless have expiated on the scaffold the unpardonable crime of loving and admiring Montrose, if he had not managed to make his escape from the Tolbooth. The Commissioners of the General Assembly could therefore only give vent to their impotent rage by unanimously ordaining that he should be excommunicated from every parish pulpit in Scotland; but as the bold Gordon had openly written and declared that he considered the new Presbyterianism "a virulent poison whereof many are sick," the sentence probably troubled him little.\*

\* These details are given in the *Records of the Commission of the General Assembly for 1646-47*, published by the Scottish History Society.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### MONTROSE IN EXILE

"Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
Keeps faithful, with a singleness of aim ;  
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait  
For wealth or honours, or-for worldly state."

WORDSWORTH, *Happy Warrior*.

1646 DURING the last few weeks before Montrose's escape from Scotland, he had satisfied himself that it would be no impossible feat to rescue the King from his virtual imprisonment in the Scottish camp by means of a combination of the loyal noblemen and gentlemen of the north. If their promises were to be trusted, an army of over 20,000 men could be got together for this purpose, and with half that number under his command Montrose knew that he could effect wonders. He had sent to the Queen at Paris, by the Earl of Crawford, a complete list of the numbers promised by each noble and chieftain, together with full information as to all the details of the scheme. Lord Crawford was specially charged to emphasize the importance of some immediate encouragement to the loyal chiefs from the Queen and the Prince of Wales before Argyll could have time to tamper with their loyal inclinations. In the month of October the Earl arrived in Paris and laid Montrose's proposals before the Queen, but he met with a cold reception, and found her and her counsellors more inclined to trust to compromise and negotiation than to any bold stroke for success.

Sept. 10 In the meantime Jens Gunnersen's sloop had landed Montrose safely at Bergen after a week's tossing on the stormy waves of the North Sea, and after being hospitably entertained for a few days by a friendly Scot, Thomas Gray, who was governor of the Bergen-hus, or royal castle, he made



his way to Denmark, in the hope of conferring with Christian V., King Charles's uncle and warm ally. Christian, however, was at that time in Germany, and Montrose went on to Hamburg, where he awaited the Queen's answer to the proposals laid before her by Lord Crawford. Month after month passed by in weary expectation, and at last, in February 1647, came the long-expected letter, written in 1647 flattering terms and expressing Henrietta Maria's approbation of Montrose's bold plan for rescuing her husband.

Her approval came all too late. The Covenanters had by that time taken steps which made the accomplishment of any such scheme impossible. By the end of January 1647 they had agreed that, upon receiving a large sum in discharge of the arrears due to the covenanting army, they would give up the King to his rebel Parliament in England. The payment of the money and the treaty for the surrender of their native Prince, who had so unwisely trusted his person to their keeping, were carefully kept separate, but it was easy for even impartial judges, at home and abroad, to see the close connection between the two treaties, and it is not surprising that the indignant Royalists should have compared the transaction with "the act of Judas, who sold his Lord for money."\*

Had Charles even at the last moment consented to "soil his conscience" by accepting the conditions offered him by the Scots, they "would willingly have renounced the English gold and have defied the English army to do its worst."† But what were the main articles of these conditions? They were that he should consent to the absolute destruction and annihilation of the Church which he loved and believed in with his whole soul, in order to force upon his subjects of England and Ireland a church which he himself and the great majority of Englishmen detested; and that he should abandon to the vengeance of their enemies all the friends who had served him loyally in his need. To such conditions no consideration of political expediency or of personal safety

\* Gardiner, vol. ii. p. 578.

† *Ibid.*

could induce Charles to listen, and the Scots were therefore not compelled to "renounce the English gold." Hamilton protested against the betrayal of the King to the Parliament, but he received £30,000 of the Parliament's money. An equal sum was paid to Argyll, in addition to £15,000 to "Argyll's friends" and £3000 to Archibald Johnston.

Montrose knew Argyll and Archibald Johnston too well to be much surprised at any result of the rash step that Charles had taken in trusting himself to them; but the tidings that reached him at Hamburg probably surpassed his worst anticipations, and, eager to attempt something for the King's rescue, he hastened by way of Holland into France. Charles, when he commanded the Marquis to lay down his arms and leave Scotland, had promised that he should be his Ambassador-Extraordinary in France, and had sent John Ashburnham to Paris to explain this arrangement to the Queen. But her favourite, Lord Jermyn, fearing lest his own power and profits should be diminished by such an appointment, persuaded Henrietta Maria to disregard the King's wishes, and Montrose heard nothing of the expected commission.

Under Jermyn's influence, Queen Mary, as she was generally called in England, sent Ashburnham to meet the Marquis with a gracious letter from herself and a proposal that he should return at once to Scotland and renew the war. This enterprise he was asked to undertake without any supplies of money or arms, depending solely upon the support he might receive from those loyal gentlemen in the north whose proffered services the Queen had virtually declined a short time before.

Montrose refused to act in so foolish and desperate a manner. The King, he said, had ordered him to go to Paris, and to Paris he would go. There can be little doubt that Ashburnham had been commissioned to use all possible means to prevent Montrose from coming to Paris, and upon the rejection of his first proposal he tried hard to persuade the Marquis to make his peace with the Covenanters, and to



court their friendship. This line of conduct would, he urged, at once secure Montrose's own safety and be of the greatest advantage to the King's service, and he offered to procure for him the royal consent, or even the King's command, to treat with the Covenanters on any terms.

This second suggestion met with a reception still more unfavourable than the first. Montrose replied that "no man was readier than himself to obey the King in all that was just or honourable, but not even the King should command his obedience in what was dishonourable, unjust, and destructive to His Majesty himself."\* It is clear that Montrose was no upholder of the doctrine of passive obedience.

Ashburnham's, or rather Lord Jermyn's, attempt to get rid of him having failed, Montrose went on to Paris and presented himself to the Queen, but though she received him with much show of personal kindness she gave little heed to his straightforward counsels. The courtiers who surrounded her resented the presence of a man so unlike themselves, and were ever on the watch to oppose any scheme which threatened to divert from them any portion of the money that remained in the royal treasury.

Finding all his efforts to organize some brave attempt for the rescue of the imprisoned King of no avail, and repelled by the atmosphere of levity and vice which pervaded the highest circles of society in the gay capital of France, Montrose held aloof from the Court, and before the summer was far advanced, found quarters for himself at some little distance from Paris. It had been suggested that his young niece, Lilius Napier, should be placed about the person of the exiled Queen, but writing in July to Sir George Stirling of Keir, her brother-in-law, he thus emphatically expressed the opinion he had formed of Henrietta's Court: "As to that which you spoke long ago concerning Lilius, I have been thinking, but to no purpose, for there is neither Scots man nor woman welcome that way, neither would any of honour or virtue, chiefly a woman, suffer themselves to live in so

July  
1647

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 192.

lewd and worthless a place. So you may satisfy that person and divert her thoughts resolutely from it."

But though Montrose neither sought nor found favour at Court he was treated with distinguished honour by some of the most eminent persons then in France. "They had a huge esteem of him," wrote the young Lord Napier to his wife in the following year, "for some eminent persons there came to see him who refused to make the first visit to the Embassadour-Extraordinary of Denmark and Sweden, yet did not hesitate to salute him first with all the respect that could be imagined." And Cardinal de Retz wrote of him as follows: "*Le Compte de Montrose, Ecossais, et chef de la maison de Graham, le seul homme du monde qui m'ait jamais rappelé l'idée de certains héros que l'on ne voit plus que dans les vies de Plutarque, avait soutenu le parti du roi d'Angleterre avec une grandeur d'âme qui n'en avait pas de pareille en ce siècle.*"

The high esteem in which Montrose was held, was sufficiently proved by the offers made to him by the French Court. Had he wished it he might have become "General of the Scots in France, Lieutenant-General of the royal army when he joined with them, commanding all *Maréchals* of the Field." Also "Captain of the *Gendarmes*, with 12,000 crowns a year pension besides his pay." In addition to all this, Cardinal Mazarin promised him that in the following year he should be "*Maréchal* of France and Captain of the King's own Guard, which is a place," writes Lord Napier, "bought and sold at a hundred and fifty thousand crowns."

Many of his friends, and among them his faithful nephew, were eager that he should accept a position so honourable and lucrative. "I was very desirous," continues the letter already quoted, "that he should settle in France, and did use all the arguments I could to make him embrace such profitable conditions. As if he had once been in charge I am confident in a very short time he should have been one of the most considerable strangers in Europe." But wealth and



position were not the objects of Montrose's ambition, and he valued them only so far as they might enable him to serve his distressed and deserted sovereign. While he was hesitating, events occurred which decided him to reject the tempting offers of the French.

The Scots, no longer disturbed by the royalist party, had quarrelled among themselves and with the English Parliament. The people as a nation were displeased with the bold policy of the English rebels, who openly declared their right to keep the King a close prisoner and to pass judgment on him. The Covenanters, on the contrary, covered their most rebellious actions with profuse expressions of loyalty. A set of verses, written early in the Civil War, justly satirizes the dishonest use which was made of the King's name by the whole of the Presbyterian party in their public acts and proclamations. The following stanza is one out of many verses, each ending with the same refrain:—

“’Tis to preserve his Majesty,  
That we against him fight,  
Nor are we ever beaten back,  
Because our cause is right.  
If any make a scruple on’t  
Our declarations say,  
Who fights for us, fights for the King,  
The clean contrary way.”

Argyll and his section, though they cared little for the fate of the King, and were perfectly willing that the monarchy itself should be abolished, yet complained loudly that their English allies had played them false in delaying to impose their idolized Covenant, with the Presbyterian ritual, upon the whole kingdom. But the Independents, represented by Cromwell and the army, had by this time become predominant, and the English Presbyterians, who had hitherto regarded “the sectaries” as mere tools to be laid aside when their own aims were fully accomplished, now found their uncongenial allies too strong for them, and had to confess their inability to carry out their engagements.

**June 1647** It was early in June when the army obtained possession of the King's person, and from that time the breach between Independents and Presbyterians became wider. In the beginning of the following year, Hamilton and Argyll, who had for some time acted together, split off as the leaders of opposite factions. Hamilton headed the "Engagers," who wished to rescue the King from the hands of the English army, and were willing to modify their old conditions as far as to enable Charles to sign the treaty without doing positive violence to his conscience. Argyll, with his clerical politicians, refused as pertinaciously as ever to have anything whatever to do with an "uncovenanted king." The Estates supported Hamilton and placed him in command of a body of 36,000 men, which they called the army of the Engagement. Argyll, deserted by his Parliament, appealed to the Assembly of the Kirk, which immediately thundered forth its anathemas and excommunications against all who should take part in the new enterprise.

**March 1648** Hamilton desired to obtain the support of the Scottish Royalists, and, in the hope of effecting this purpose, he sent emissaries to entreat for the sanction of the Queen and the Prince of Wales. Henrietta Maria listened willingly to the plausible representations of the envoys, and concealed the negotiation as long as possible from Montrose. When she could no longer keep it a secret she told him, with many excuses, that she and the King had resolved to trust their affairs to the Covenanters, and that they could not now draw back.

Long experience had made it impossible for Montrose to believe that Hamilton could be safely trusted, and he did not hesitate to point out to the Queen that such an attempt, under such a commander, could, in his opinion, only end in disaster. At the same time he was willing to do anything in his power to avert or lessen the danger which he foresaw, and he offered, with the King's authority and special commission, to raise an army of those loyalists in Scotland who were not likely to join heartily with Hamilton or to enrol



themselves under his command. With this loyal army he proposed to take the field as an auxiliary to the Engagers, in the belief that he might thus both strengthen the royal cause and act as a check upon any disloyalty among Hamilton's heterogeneous forces.

As, however, the Queen and her advisers had made up their mind to trust entirely to the Covenanters, Montrose's offers met with no encouragement, and he felt that he could do no good by remaining any longer in France. He had come to the conclusion that the chief political leaders in that country had been, from the first, inclined to foment the difference between Charles and his subjects, and that if he engaged in the French service he might find himself forced "to conceive and wink at his Prince's ruin."

He therefore left the neighbourhood of Paris without **March** giving any notice of his departure, and lest he should be prevented from going to the Austrian Court, with which the French were not on good terms, Lord Napier remained behind. This caused it to be supposed that Montrose had only gone for a short time to the country to recruit his health, "for it was ever said," wrote Lord Napier, "that Montrose and his nephew were like the Pope and the Church, who would be inseparable." Napier only remained in Paris till he heard of his uncle's safe arrival at Geneva, when he hastened to follow him, accompanied by some fifteen gentlemen of Montrose's train, including a brother of the Earl of Kinnoul and several other officers of high birth and position.

Leaving his friends to await his return in the Low **April** Countries, the Marquis, with only two attendants, travelled through the Tyrol and Bavaria, and not finding the Emperor at Vienna, he followed him to Prague, where he met with a most gracious reception. The Emperor made him a marshal in the Imperial army, and honoured him in public and in private with every mark of esteem, commissioning him to levy troops in any part of the Empire, and to form them into independent regiments under his own command. The moment for such levies was favourable. The close of the

Thirty Years' War was the signal for disbanding large numbers of mercenary troops, among whom there were probably thousands of his own countrymen in search of fresh employment for their swords. As that part of Germany which borders upon Flanders was the most convenient for his purpose, the Emperor warmly recommended the Marquis and his cause to his brother, the Archduke Leopold, who was at that time governor of the Spanish Netherlands.

By this arrangement Montrose would be at hand in case an opportunity offered of serving the King, and he left the Austrian Court well satisfied with the results of his negotiations. Germany being still the battlefield of contending armies, he travelled by a circuitous route through Hungary, Poland, Prussia and Denmark to Brussels, where, about the middle of August, he rejoined his nephew and his other friends, having been absent from them for more than four months. The Archduke was at Tournay, and thither Montrose followed him; but as Leopold had just been defeated at Lens by the Prince of Condé, he was unable just then to assist in any way the Marquis's projects.

**Aug. 20,**  
**1648**

At Brussels, early in September, Montrose heard of the entire and disgraceful collapse of the army of the Engagement. Cromwell, with a greatly inferior number of troops, had utterly routed the Scots at Preston, in Lancashire, with hardly any loss on his own side, and Hamilton, without making an effort to rally his men, had surrendered himself and his fine body of cavalry to the victors. The English Royalists, under brave Sir Marmaduke Langdale, had alone fought worthily, but without a capable commander-in-chief their courage was of no avail and only brought destruction upon themselves and the cause they sought to serve.

Vigorously pursuing his advantage, Cromwell marched into Scotland, where he was received with open arms by Argyll, who entertained him with ostentatious magnificence as the deliverer of the country. With the help of Cromwell, Argyll entirely suppressed his rivals of the Hamiltonian party, and so firmly established his own power that he be-



came for the time the absolute and unquestioned ruler of Scotland. These disasters, which occurred in the summer of 1648, caused great consternation among the Royalists, but their full importance was not at first realised.

Montrose remained at Brussels, waiting and longing for an opportunity to retrieve the misfortunes of the royal cause by some "clear and gallant design." He corresponded on the subject with Prince Rupert, who entered with hearty sympathy into his wishes, and expressed his readiness to undertake any service with him. But the Queen and the Prince of Wales—either because they feared to offend the Covenanters, or because they hesitated to ask for that advice to which they had deliberately shut their ears as long as their cause retained any prospect of success—held no communication with the Marquis throughout the autumn and winter of this year, and wearied with inaction and heart-sick with hope deferred he resolved at last to return to the Imperial Court.

But in the beginning of 1649 the long silence was broken by a note from the Prince of Wales thanking Montrose for the continuance of his affection, and informing him that Sir Edward Hyde, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would meet him at any place he chose to appoint. The letter appeared to be written in answer to some message or proposal sent, as the Prince appeared to suppose, by Montrose himself. This was, however, a mistake. Montrose has been accused of being too ready to put himself forward and of wearying Charles with entreaties to be allowed to undertake some enterprise in defence of the royal cause, but so far is this from being the truth that he had in fact made no attempt to recall himself to the memory of the Prince of Wales or of the Queen since he had left Paris in April. The letter he now received was entirely unexpected, for he had commissioned no one to speak to the Prince respecting himself or any design he had formed. This he clearly affirmed in his reply, supposing that the mission of the person alluded to "was prompted by the impatience of others."

But however strongly Montrose held in control his own impatience, he welcomed with delight a summons to action of any honourable kind in the King's service. In his answer to the Prince's letter he warmly expressed his feeling, adding, however, a gentle rebuke of that hesitating, inconstant temper which had contributed so much to the ruin of the royal cause. "If your Highness," he wrote, "shall but vouchsafe a little faith unto your loyal servants, and stand at guard with others, your affairs can soon be whole." To trust, and to trust entirely, was easy to Montrose, but to Prince Charles it was impossible.

Even now he insisted that the strictest secrecy should be observed in the interview between the Chancellor and Montrose, in order to avoid offence to the extreme Covenanters in Scotland, to whom he was again beginning to look for assistance. This double-dealing policy was much disapproved of by many of the Royalists in Holland, most of whom were strongly of opinion that Montrose, "as the man of the clearest honour, courage and affection for the King's service," was the only fit person to be employed in the conduct of any undertaking for the royal cause in Scotland.

Montrose's answer to the Prince of Wales was dated 28th January, two days before the occurrence of that tragedy at Whitehall, the possibility of which, in spite of many warnings, was never fairly believed in by the nation until it actually happened. Before the proposed conference with the Chancellor could take place the fatal news reached Montrose at Brussels. It is hardly possible now to form any conception of the shock which the King's violent death gave to the Royalists of the seventeenth century. Their idea of the sacredness of an anointed king was bound up with their deepest religious convictions, and cannot be even faintly imagined by the ordinary Englishman of our democratic day. King Charles's misfortunes, too, and his dignified and saintly patience, which touched even his bitter enemies, had roused every tender and generous feeling in the breasts of his loyal adherents.



It is said that several ardent Royalists, overwhelmed by grief and horror, actually died from the shock of the tidings of the King's execution, and Montrose himself—strong man though he was—when the fatal news was told to him, fell on the ground in the midst of his friends, rigid and apparently lifeless. On recovering consciousness he shut himself up in his room and for two days would see no one. At the end of that time Dr Wishart was admitted to his chamber, and on his table found the following lines:—

"Great, good, and just, could I but rate  
My grief, and thy too rigid fate,  
I'd weep the world in such a strain  
As it should deluge once again.  
But since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies,  
More from Briareus' hands than Argus' eyes,  
I'll sing thine obsequies with trumpet sounds,  
And write thine epitaph in blood and wounds."

It appears that Montrose learned the details of the King's death from Hyde, and a letter written in answer to the Chancellor's "sad relations" in one graphic sentence reveals the heartstricken horror which was so widely felt at the time, though felt by few so deeply as by this imaginative and intensely warm-hearted Scotsman. "The griefs that astonish," he writes, "speak more with their silence than those that can complain." But such a grief was a fresh incentive of action. "It will be no more time now to dally," he says. "For if affection and love to the justice and virtue of that cause be not incitement great enough, anger and so just revenge, methinks, should wing us on."

Two or three days after the date of this letter (February the 15th) he went to Sevenbergen, the place he had appointed for the private interview the young King wished him to hold with Hyde. Immediately after the meeting, Montrose betook himself to the Hague, resolved to shield the young King from the machinations of Argyll, whose agents had already left Scotland and were on their way to Holland. He was welcomed with great cordiality by Charles, who had been living in complete seclusion for many weeks in consequence of an attack of smallpox in the winter.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### SCOTTISH PARTIES AT THE HAGUE

"Who rowing hard against the stream  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream."

TENNYSON.

1649 ALL the latent loyalty of the Scottish people had been roused by the openly expressed determination of the Independents in England to sit in judgment on their King. The Estates no sooner heard of the "High Court of Justice,"\* set up for his trial, than they insisted on sending commissioners to protest against the proceedings of the miserable remnant of Lords and Commons (only three of the Lords) who called themselves the English Parliament, and who were in truth the mere puppets of Cromwell and the army.

Argyll was too wise to offer any open opposition to the strong feeling of the nation, but he gave such instructions to the commissioners as should ensure a continuance of friendly relations between Scotland and the actual rulers of England whether or not the King's safety was secured. His policy was well carried out. When it was clear that the King's death had been finally resolved upon, the Scottish commissioners gave in their "very calm protestation," in which they expressed their disapprobation of "the endeavours used for taking away the King's life and for introducing a sinful and ungodly toleration in religion."† It was generally understood that the party of the Kirk at least objected more strongly to toleration in religion than to the execution of the King.

The mass of the Scottish people were, however, greatly

\* It consisted of 135 commissioners who were to be both judge and jury. A very small proportion of this number could be induced to take any part in the proceedings.

† Clarendon.



shocked by the violent death of the Sovereign, to whose person they had always expressed in words, if not in deeds, their loyalty; and the fact, to which they could hardly blind themselves, that they or their rulers had betrayed him to his ruin, made them only the more anxious to disclaim any sympathy with those who were directly responsible for his execution. The news reached Edinburgh on the 4th of February, **February** and the next day Chancellor Loudon, "in his black velvet gown," stood at the Market Cross and proclaimed Charles II. as the rightful heir and successor to the crown of Scotland. The usual form of proclamation was, however, altered by the addition of a proviso that the new King was not to be allowed the exercise of his royal power until he should sign the League and Covenant.

In spite of this illegal proviso, the nation turned with a loyal impulse to their young King, not yet nineteen, who, though strangely unlike his father, was not without some of the attractive qualities which were hereditary in the Stuarts. The Rev. Mr Baillie, speaking of him as he appeared in the early spring of 1649, says: "He is one of the most gentle, innocent, well-inclyned Princes, so far as yet appears, that lives in the world; a trimme person and of a manly carriage; understands prettie well; speaks not much; would God he were amongst us!" The commissioners, too, described him as "of a very gentle, courteous disposition."\*

Argyll, with all the suppleness of a modern "statesman" who seeks guidance from the people, threw in his lot with a movement which he could not check, but hoped to bend, intent only on retaining his position at the head of affairs. He was thus able to dictate the terms on which the young King should be invited to Scotland. His first emissary, Sir Joseph Douglas, arrived at the Hague as early as 20th February, but his presence produced so little effect that two days later Charles formally commissioned Montrose as his lieutenant-governor in Scotland, and captain-general of all

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 237, note 4.

the forces in that kingdom, as well as of any troops brought there from England or Ireland.

**March 1649** Much alarmed by the spirited attitude of the young King and his advisers, the Scottish Parliament sent off a fresh set of commissioners before the end of March, with an invitation to Charles to return with them to Scotland. Among them were the Earl of Cassilis, the Reverend Robert Baillie and several other ministers. They looked so sad and solemn, and saluted the young King with such profound reverence, that the onlookers at first imagined they were going to implore pardon for their conduct towards his father and to make a humble submission to himself. But appearances are often deceptive, and the commissioners soon showed that their message was something very different.

After a lengthy address, which they introduced, says Wishart, "with abundance of deep sighs and heavy groans," they laid their instructions before the King, with the assurance that the terms demanded by the Estates were most moderate, just and necessary. Chief among these "most moderate" terms was the old and oft-repeated demand that Charles should sign the Solemn League and Covenant himself, and force it and the narrow Scottish system of Presbyterianism in all its details upon England and Ireland. But the first condition upon which they offered the King the enjoyment of that royal power to which they had already declared him lawfully entitled was that he should not hold any communication with "James Grahame, late Earl of Montrose," on the ground that he was an excommunicated person. They called him "that cursed man, whose scandalous carriage, pernicious counsels and contagious company cannot fail, so long as he remains in his obstinate impenitency, to dishonour and pollute all places of his familiar access, and to provoke the anger of the Most High God against the same."

Gratitude and fidelity were not conspicuous among Charles II.'s few virtues, but he could not listen quite unmoved to this scurrilous abuse of the bravest and most



magnanimous of the self-devoted men who had fought in defence of his father. Before returning an answer to the messages of the Kirk and Estates of Scotland he resolved upon consulting Montrose himself and the other Scottish nobles who had gathered round him at the Hague. Lanerick and Lauderdale had taken refuge in Holland early in the year, and there is good reason to believe that Lauderdale at least had a secret understanding with Argyll, who was not unwilling to make use of the "Engagers" in order to modify the excessive demands he found it necessary to make in his character as head of the extreme Covenanters. These two, with several other lords who had been concerned in the Engagements, formed a faction of their own in the divided little court at the Hague, while Montrose's old enemy, "little Will Murray," represented Argyll and the dominant party at Edinburgh. Lauderdale and his friends made in private the most ardent professions of loyalty to the King, and pretended to disapprove entirely of the unreasonable demands put forward by Argyll and the Kirk. But in public they backed the covenanting commissioners in every way, and both in public and in private the two parties were genuinely agreed on one point—their virulent hatred of Montrose. Not only had they the insolence to request the young King to banish "James Grahame" from Court, but they refused to meet him in conference, and if he came into a room where they happened to be, they immediately left it by another door, even in presence of the King. Montrose was an excommunicated man, and it never occurred to those Protestant Scotsmen to ask themselves whether the censures of the Kirk had been inflicted on righteous or reasonable grounds.

Seen in the light that history throws upon Lauderdale in his after career, when he stood revealed as the cruel persecutor of the downtrodden Covenanters, and the most unscrupulous and licentious of Charles II.'s minions, there is a strange irony in his assumption at this period of the attitude of a self-righteous Pharisee who might fairly treat Montrose as "an ethnic and a publican."

The English Royalists were justly incensed at the cool audacity of the Scottish commissioners, and felt that to drive Montrose from the King's presence for no other alleged crime than that of having served Charles I. with unwavering loyalty and fidelity was to pass sentence of banishment on half the members of his Council.

Many attempts were made to reconcile the two parties, whose united efforts were so necessary to the success of the royal cause. Montrose, on his part, was perfectly willing to overlook all personal affronts and differences of opinion, on the simple condition that Lanerick and his friends should assert in public those principles of loyalty which they were so ready to profess in private. But the "moderate party," as they were sometimes called, could not be persuaded to perform this simple act of honesty.

Lanerick, who had become Duke of Hamilton by the execution of his brother in England, seems to have been sincerely anxious to serve the King, and was even willing to join with Montrose. But he was entirely under the influence of Lauderdale, and while he lamented his hard case as a member of the Church of England, in being forced to comply with the Covenant, which he detested and looked upon as the ruin of the nation, he declared that he dared not confess his real opinions openly, and that if he did he should have neither power nor credit to serve the King.

Lauderdale's personal animosity against Montrose was almost inconceivably violent. He passionately swore that though he wished for nothing so much as to see the King restored to his throne, he would far rather that Charles should continue to live in exile than that James Grahame should be received at Court.

Endeavouring to find out the reason of this antipathy, a member of the Council one day asked the Earl, "what foul offence the Marquis of Montrose had ever committed that should hinder anyone from combining with him for the King's restoration?" Lauderdale replied that Montrose had, during his most barbarous war in Scotland, been guilty



of every inhumanity, never giving quarter to any man, and pursuing all the advantages he ever got with the utmost outrage and cruelty. He particularly instanced Inverlochy, where, he said, Montrose had in one battle killed 1500 Campbells of the blood and name of Argyll.

This accusation of giving no quarter was entirely false; but an officer who was present reminded Lauderdale that quarter was certainly not given by the Covenanters in the war referred to, and that it was much more barbarous to behead and hang prisoners of war, or to shoot them down in cold blood, than to kill an enemy in the field in fair fight, or even in pursuit; and he asked the Earl, "whether Montrose had ever caused any man to be put to death after the battle was ended, since what was done in it *flagrante*, was more to be imputed to the fierceness of the soldiers than to the general's want of humanity." Lauderdale admitted that he did not know that Montrose was guilty of anything but what was done in the field, but he angrily maintained that for this he would never be forgiven in Scotland. It was indeed his extraordinary success which roused against Montrose the furious indignation of his defeated enemies.

When the King found it impossible to induce the Hamiltonian party to meet for conference with Montrose and his adherents, he requested them to give him their advice in presence of his Council. "The Marquis of Montrose," says Clarendon (who, as Chancellor Hyde, was at that time the most prominent member of the Council), "expressed great willingness to give His Majesty satisfaction in this or any other way, being willing to deliver his opinion concerning things or persons before anybody or in any place." To complete this bit of contemporary portraiture it may be added that Montrose's opinions, however decided their tone might be, were always expressed in temperate words and with perfect courtesy.

The Lords of the Engagement were neither so frank nor so courteous, and they refused to comply with the King's desire, but they consented to give a written opinion upon

the conditions required by the Scottish commissioners, and with this Charles had to content himself.

Montrose gave his advice in the form of a letter to the King. He passed over in dignified silence the preliminary condition in which Charles was requested to consent to his own disgrace and banishment, and began by referring to the demand that the King should subscribe the Covenant, which was represented as a national document subscribed by his grandfather and approved by his father.

Montrose pointed out that the original Covenant signed by James I. in his nonage was a mere protestation against the "exorbitances and abuses of the Roman hierarchy, without condemning the primitive times or ancient discipline from the beginning in all Christian churches." It was meant for a passing exigency, not to be "a snare or stumbling-block to all posterity." He did not consider the Covenant of 1638, which professed to be a renewal of the former one, objectionable in itself, though he allowed that it had been made "a religious pretence of" and used as a handle for sedition. It had been signed by many who "meant rightly enough for His Majesty's service," and provided it was confined to the kingdom of Scotland, Montrose saw no harm in the King's signing it, if he was willing to do so.

But "as for that Solemn League," he continued, "which they always strive to twist along at with the other, it is so full of violence, injustice and rebellion that, in my humble opinion, it were your Majesty's shame and ruin ever to give ear to it; it being nothing but a condemning of your father's memory, joining all your dominions in rebellion by your own consent against you."

"They would also force your Majesty to quit the form of worship and service in your own family. And yet they made it a ground of rebellion against your royal father that they but imagined he intended to meddle with them after the like kind."

He remarked, with a touch of bitter irony, that "whereas they promise to continue the same faithfulness unto your



Majesty as they have done to your royal father, it appears they do not at all dissemble on this point. Their selling him to his enemies, their instructions to their commissioners, and all their public and private carriages with his murderers, doth sufficiently declare it."

He further pointed out that the Covenanters required His Majesty to consent that all civil matters should be determined by Parliament, and all matters ecclesiastical by the Assembly, thus leaving nothing but the mere name of royalty to the King. Lastly he reminded Charles that at the very time the Covenanters were treating with him they were not ashamed of murdering his best subjects, alluding, without doubt, to the fate of the Marquis of Huntly, who was executed at this time in Edinburgh for no crime but his loyalty to Charles I.

Montrose concluded this long letter by advising the King "resolutely to trust the justice of his cause to God and better fortunes, and to use all vigorous and active ways as the only human means" by which he might reinstate himself upon the throne of his father.\*

The letter was read in Council on the 21st of May 1649, **May 21** with the result that the terms of the commissioners were rejected,† and Montrose was appointed Admiral of Scotland, in addition to his previous commissions as lieutenant-general and Commander-in-chief in that kingdom. Soon afterwards Charles left the Hague to pay a visit to his mother in France, and was accompanied part of the way by Montrose, to whom, before they parted, he bound himself still further by the following note, dated at Breda, June the 22nd, 1649:

"MONTROSE,—Whereas the necessity of my affairs has obliged me to renew your former trusts and commissions concerning the kingdom of Scotland, the more to encourage you unto my service and render you confident of my resolutions, both touching myself and you, I have thought fit by these to signify to you that I will not determine anything touching the affairs of that kingdom without having your advice thereupon, as also I will not do anything that shall be prejudicial to your Commission.

CHARLES R."

\* The letter in full in Napier's *Memorials of Montrose*, vol. ii. p. 376.

† They landed at Leith to relate their failure on the 27th of May.

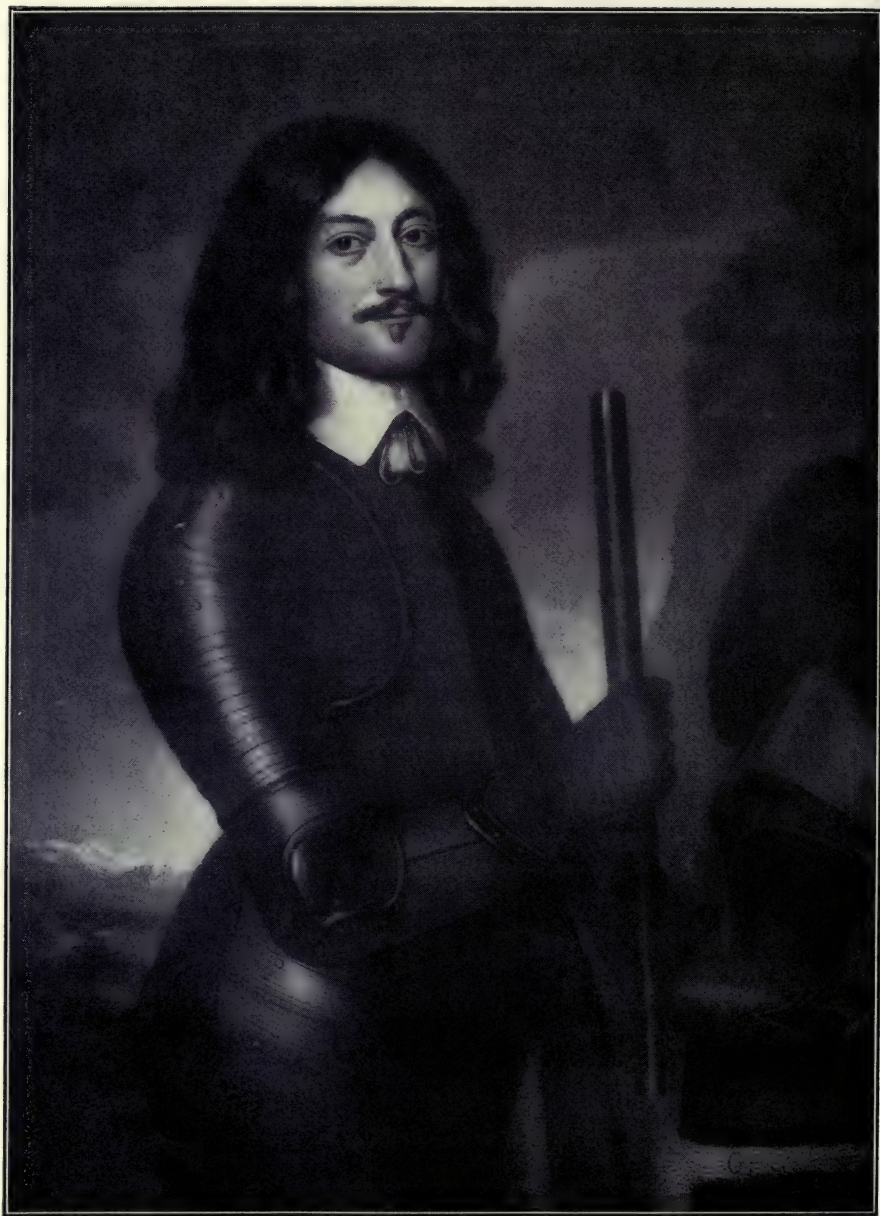
Not long after the Queen also wrote to Montrose, whom she always addressed as "Cher Cousin," and her letter, like several others he had received from her since he had left Paris, was filled with the warmest expressions of friendship and gratitude, but she always showed her regard for him rather in words than in deeds, and he did not at all resemble the facile courtiers who were her real favourites. Of all the members of the royal family none sympathized so warmly with Montrose as Elisabeth of Bohemia, the celebrated sister of Charles I. She and her four daughters, who were famed throughout Europe for their beauty, talent and accomplishments, were at that time living in Holland, and Montrose met them frequently during his visits to the Hague. They all greatly admired and appreciated him, and when he left the Hague a correspondence began which was kept up without any long intermission till within a short time of his death.

His letters have not been discovered, but many of Elisabeth's have been preserved, and while they convey a vivid idea of her warm esteem and affection for Montrose—who was about the age of one of her sons—they are enlivened by an occasional playful humour which was characteristic of the high-spirited Queen of Bohemia. She entreats Montrose in the earliest of these letters not to leave the King as long as he remains at Breda, "for without question," she writes, "there is nothing will be omitted to ruin you and your friends, and so the King at last." In a postscript she thanks him for his picture, which, she says, she has hung up in her cabinet to fright away the "Brethren," a name she laughingly applies to the Covenanters. The picture here referred to was a life-size, half-length portrait, painted between February and June of 1649 by Gerard Honthorst (*Gherardo dalla notte*). It is still in an excellent state of preservation,\* though the colouring is evidently darkened by time, so that the "keen grey eyes" mentioned in contemporary descrip-

\* The picture belongs to Lord Dalhousie, and hangs in the dining-room of Brechin Castle.







Honthorst pinxit.]

[ To face page 347.

*Montrose*



tion might almost be supposed to be dark brown. It is a beautiful and striking picture, and of the few authentic portraits of Montrose the only one which gives a clear idea of the man, and enables us to realise to some extent the charm of his personal presence.

The calm, steadfast face, strong yet gentle, shines out clear and pale from its setting of dark, wavy hair, worn in cavalier fashion, flowing to the shoulder. The features, though not strikingly regular, are good. Strong, straight brows over well-opened dark grey eyes, a finely-drawn, aquiline nose, and a mouth at once sweet-tempered and singularly resolute, combine to make an interesting and attractive countenance. He stands, clad in black armour—worn in memory of the King's late tragic fate—and in his gauntleted hand he holds the dark red baton of a field-marshal of the Empire. The background is in fine harmony with the figure, and as in the mass of rolling grey-blue clouds one break of red stormy light on the horizon seems to suggest the hope of the future, so the half smile on the slightly compressed lips contrasts with the grave and even sad expression of the rest of the face.

The Queen of Hearts, as Elisabeth was sometimes called, might well be proud of such a picture of so gallant a friend.

In one letter full of news from England and Ireland she writes that “the English rebel Parliament can get no soldier to go for Ireland; but it is thought they will send their army for Scotland; without doubt to help the ‘Brethren’ there. I wish Jamie Graeme among them with all his followers. But till there be taken a better resolution than I hear my Lord Jermyn desires, I do not desire you should quit Brussels while there is danger of change. I hear Jermyn has orders to get your commission for Hamilton! If that be true, sure they are all mad or worse.” The Queen signs herself, “ever constantly your most affectionate Elisabeth.”

Her fears that the young King, under the influence of his mother and her counsellors, should follow a wavering policy that might be fatal to Montrose proved to be only too well

founded. The latest letter that has been preserved to us, dated January the 7th, 1650, ends with a touching prayer for his safety in Scotland, which shows that those who were most deeply interested in him had already some forebodings as to his fate.



## CHAPTER XXX

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT ATTEMPT

"My life I never held but as a pawn,  
To wage against thine enemies ; nor fear to lose it."  
SHAKESPEARE, *King Lear*.

JUST before the young King parted from Montrose at **July 6,**  
Brussels, he renewed and extended his commission as Am- **1649**  
bassador-Extraordinary to foreign courts—a high-sounding  
title, but, as circumstances then stood, an office with little  
enough of honour or profit, and one which involved much  
weary work and waiting. Nothing could well have been  
more distasteful to Montrose than the task he now set him-  
self; that of wandering from one small court to another,  
petitioning for loans of money and war material from princes  
and senates who took little interest in his great cause, and  
with no security to offer them in return, but such as might  
be drawn from his hopes of success in the face of difficulties  
only too apparent to every statesman in Europe.

As it was impossible for him to start at once, he sent  
his half-brother, Harry Grahame, to Frederick William of  
Brandenburg—the Great Elector, as he was afterwards called  
—with a letter from himself, which proved so persuasive  
that the Elector immediately promised a large sum of money  
towards the expenses of the projected expedition to Scot-  
land. This letter was written from the Hague, where Mon-  
trose was actively employed during the months of July and  
August in making preparations for his great attempt.  
Queen Elisabeth had retired to Rhenen, where he paid her a  
farewell visit early in August, meeting there his fast friend  
and warm admirer, the Earl of Kinnoul, who was also a  
favourite with Elisabeth. In this intimate circle, all the  
members of which were deeply interested in the one absorb-

ing topic, plans and purposes were freely discussed, and it was settled that Kinnoul should start as soon as possible, with a detachment of about a hundred recruits and some eighty officers, their destination being the Orkneys, where Kinnoul's uncle, the Earl of Morton, exercised supreme control.

To obtain recruits was the easiest part of the undertaking, for Montrose was besieged with offers of service \* from multitudes of Scotsmen, who, after taking part in the Thirty Years' War, were now being disbanded by thousands, and found themselves without employment. It was by help of this same class of men that the Scottish Covenanters had, ten years earlier, been able to contend successfully against Charles I., but the writers who calmly acquiesce in the employment by Argyll and the Estates of the two Leslie, Baillie, Harvey, Turner and Monro, with their trained veterans,† are virtuously indignant with the great royalist leader because he, too, was willing to accept soldiers of this type in the desperate strait to which, from his point of view, his King and country were reduced. The only difference was that in the one case such men were employed to pull down the monarchy ; in the other, to restore it.

In sending to Scotland a few hundred Danes, who do not seem to have been by any means a ferocious set of men, Montrose was only forestalling the practice of William of Orange, who, nearly forty years later, brought with him several bands of Dutch troops to act as a body-guard, and to be the nucleus of the army which he expected to raise on English soil. The Danes were probably much less exacting as to terms than the Scottish recruits, and if men were easy to come by there was overwhelming difficulty in obtaining funds to equip and transport them to the scene of action. The Danish Chancellor Ulfeldt, who appears to have been specially attracted by Montrose, furnished him with some valuable jewels (speedily converted into material of war), and made over to him a considerable sum of money, part of which came from

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 253.

† In Captain Dalgetty Sir Walter Scott has drawn a typical portrait of these Scottish mercenaries.



Ulfeldt's private resources. But notwithstanding this assistance there was so much delay in procuring a ship to carry Kinnoul and his small detachment to the Orkneys that at least ten days before they could start, Montrose decided to wait no longer. He bade a last farewell to the Hague, and in company with his faithful nephew, Lord Napier, he set out for Hamburg, where Sir John Cochrane, Charles II.'s political agent in the north, had been expecting him daily and hourly for a full fortnight.

The parliamentary party at the Hague were greatly Sept. 2 relieved by the departure of so formidable an antagonist as the Great Marquis, and Strickland, the new English envoy to the Dutch Republic, wrote to his friends in London that since Montrose had left the Hague he was free to do as he liked. All his opponents seemed to have disappeared.

It was the beginning of September when Montrose arrived at Hamburg. Here he found matters in a very unsatisfactory state. Sir John Cochrane, according to Charles I., "was a man who had many discourses, most of his own praises," and his own personal interests certainly appear always to have had the first place in his consideration. He had little discretion, and had got into serious difficulties at Hamburg by his violent quarrels with the English company of merchants settled there, most of them being strong Parliament men. Montrose had no choice but to employ him, as he was appointed by the King, and he was sent to negotiate for supplies with James, Duke of Courland, a prince who had always kept up a close connection with the House of Stuart, and who, being a trader on a large scale, was better able to afford pecuniary aid than most of the German potentates. Cochrane's mission at first promised well, but whether from his dishonesty or from other causes little of the help that was promised ever reached Montrose.

Staying little more than a week at Hamburg, he hastened to meet King Frederic at Flensburg, in Schleswig, and he made a highly favourable impression on the Danish monarch,

who not only promised all that could reasonably be expected of him, but wrote to Charles II. acknowledging the "singular dexterity" with which the Marquis had pleaded his cause.\* But in Denmark the King had little power apart from his council of nobles, and Montrose went on to Copenhagen, there to await their decision. He had to wait long, and on October the 19th he wrote (in French) a characteristic letter to the King, begging to know his intentions, and reminding him that "delays are the worst of all evils," and that in affairs like the one in hand "a refusal that sets us free is better than a promise that ruins us."

To counterbalance his many anxieties he received the most encouraging news from Scotland. A long letter from Kinnoul told of his safe arrival and landing in Orkney, after a stormy voyage of nearly three weeks and several hair-breadth escapes from parliamentary cruisers. The Earl wrote in high spirits, for not only had he succeeded beyond his expectations in obtaining allies, but the very next day after his landing, a ship of sixteen guns, anchored in one of the roads of the Orkneys, and intended by Argyll for some of his own friends in the West Highlands, had been voluntarily made over to his use by the captain. His uncle, the Earl of Morton, had received him with open arms, and had thrown himself heart and soul into the enterprise. Kinnoul, perceiving that his uncle was piqued because the commission for raising the country had been bestowed upon his nephew instead of upon himself, at once transferred the commission to Morton, feeling sure that Montrose would approve of this self-denying step. Everything was going well, and Montrose was eagerly expected by the whole country. "Your Lordship," he wrote, "is gaped after with that expectation that the Jews look for the Messiah, and certainly your presence will restore your groaning country to its liberties and the King to his rights." The letter is signed "the most passionate of your servants—KINNOUL."

While he was still waiting at Copenhagen, Montrose re-

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 260.



ceived the following note from the King, written at St Germain's under the influence of the Queen-Mother:

"MY LORD,—I entreat you to go on vigorously, and with your wonted courage and care, in the prosecution of those trusts I have committed to you, and not to be startled with any reports you may hear, as if I were otherwise inclined to the Presbyterians than when I left you. I assure you I am upon the same principle as I was, and depend as much as ever upon your undertakings and endeavours for my service, being fully resolved to assist and support you therein to the uttermost of my power, as you shall find in effect when you desire anything to be done by your affectionate friend,

CHARLES R."

Henrietta herself, anxious to lull Montrose's suspicions, wrote to him, entreating him not to listen to the reports of her enemies, but to believe in her faithful and devoted affection for him whatever might happen. But she was at that very time urging her son to conclude a virtually unconditional surrender to Argyll and his party, destined to ruin the enterprise to which Montrose had devoted himself. These letters did not dispel the uneasiness caused by the disquieting rumours which reached Montrose concerning the nature of the fresh conferences between Charles and the covenanting commissioners, and as one means of counteracting the damping effects of such reports upon his friends in Scotland and abroad he issued a remarkable Declaration, intended to stir up his countrymen on the Continent to join in his enterprise, and to rekindle the flame of Scottish loyalty at home.

The paper was probably written while he was waiting at Copenhagen, and was published early in November 1649. In strong, incisive language it rehearsed the treasonable practices of the Covenanters from the beginning. The following passages give a vivid idea of the view taken by the genuine Royalists of the period, of some of those events which, even now, when all the actors of them have lain for two hundred years and more in their quiet graves, stir men's hearts with a deep and living interest, such as no other part of our history has equal power to excite.

"While they had received all imaginable satisfaction at

home, as their own very acts of Parliament doth witness,\* wherein they say that his late Majesty 'parted a contented King from a contented people,' finding their rebel brood in England beginning to lessen, and that His Majesty's party appeared to have by much the better, they not only contrary to the duty of subjects, but all faith, covenants, oaths, attestations to which they had so often invoked God, His angels, the world and all as witnesses, did enter with a strong army the kingdom of England, persecute their prince in a foreign nation, assist a company of stranger rebels against their native King and those of the loyal party within that same kingdom, except for which the whole world does know, His Majesty had, without all peradventure, prevailed."

After relating how the late King, "out of his so much invincible goodness and natural inclination towards his native people," had cast himself into their hands (at Newark), it goes on to say: "They, contrary to all faith and paction, trust of friends, duty of subjects, laws of hospitality, nature, nations, divine and human, for which there hath never been precedent, nor can ever be a follower, most infamously, and beyond all imaginable expression of invincible baseness, to the blush of Christianity and abomination of mankind, sold their Sovereign over to their merciless fellow-traitors to be destroyed."

Then after referring to their dealings with "his present Majesty" in no complimentary terms, follows an assurance that the young King will faithfully ratify all that was "done by his royal father for their peace," and a promise of full pardon and amnesty to all, "excepting such who, upon clear evidence, shall be found guilty of that most damnable fact of the murder of his father," and the Declaration concludes thus:—

"Wherefore all who have any duty left them to God, their king, country, friends, homes, wives, children, or who would change now at last the tyranny, violence and oppres-

\* Referring to the period of the King's visit to Scotland in 1641 when Montrose was a prisoner in the Castle of Edinburgh.



sion of those rebels with the mild and innocent government of their just prince, or revenge the horrid and execrable murder of their sacred king, redeem their nation from infamy, themselves from slavery, restore the present and oblige the ages to come, let them as Christians, subjects, patriots, friends, husbands and fathers, join themselves forthwith with us in this present service, that is so full of conscience, duty, honour, and all just interests, and not apprehend any evils which they may fear can fall, half so much as those they presently lie under: for though there may appear many difficulties, yet let them not doubt of God's justice, nor the happy providence that may attend His Majesty, nor their own resolutions, nor the fortunes of those who are joined withal, resolving with Joab to play the man for their people and the cities of their God, and let the Lord do whatever seemeth him good; wherein whatsoever shall happen, they may at least be assured of Crastinus's recompense, that dead or alive the world will give them thanks.

MONTROSE."

This paper was circulated in Edinburgh some time in December 1649, and it immediately drew forth from the Covenanters two furious rejoinders, in which they accused Montrose of having, "in the blindness of his mind and hardness of his heart, as being given up of God as Pharaoh was," called that "blessed work" of their *rebellion*: and they went on to maintain that all their actions, including their combination in 1643 with the English parliamentary army, had been "for the honour and happiness of the King," and "for the defence and preservation of His Majesty's person, and his just greatness and authority!" The longer of the two covenanting declarations was the handiwork of Montrose's old enemy, Archibald Johnston, the clerk register of the Estates and one of the most unscrupulous members of the party.

This document, which was a clever and plausible statement, from the extreme covenanting point of view, of all the chief events that had happened from the beginning of the

"Troubles" in 1638 to the death of the King in 1649, calls Montrose "that viperous brood of Satan whom the Church hath delivered into the hands of the devil, and the nation doth generally detest and abhor." Among other epithets applied in this partisan manifesto to the great royalist leader are "impudent braggart," "perfidious traitor," "child of the devil," "dissembling hypocrite," and "impudent liar." This string of abuse, unsupported by a single fact, is accompanied by a studied misrepresentation of Montrose's motives from the very commencement of his career. The virulence and personal animus of the attack ought, one would think, to have defeated its object; but when party spirit runs high, vituperation, even of the most scurrilous kind, is often a more effective weapon than any appeal to reason or to facts. Archibald Johnston's brief for the Covenant attained the object which it was intended to achieve. It not only blackened Montrose's fair fame in his own time and country, but in after ages it affected the judgments of historians whose political opinions tempted them to accept without sufficient investigation the picture of the royalist champion which they found painted in such glaring colours in an important contemporary document.

Much light has been thrown upon Montrose's movements during the six months that preceded his last fatal enterprise by recent discoveries, at home and abroad, of contemporary records which confirm all that was already known of the nobility of his character and of the powerful influence he exercised on men in all positions.\* One interesting letter was written by a certain John Gordon, a colonel in the Swedish army, who had served under Gustavus Adolphus

\* These records have been brought to light by the researches of Messrs Murdoch and Simpson, the editors of *The Deeds of Montrose* (1893), a new and spirited translation of Wishart, with very full and valuable historical notes from contemporary and other sources. The book includes three entirely new chapters, giving a clear narrative of Montrose's proceedings abroad during these months, thus filling up a gap which neither Wishart nor Napier had bridged. Dr S. R. Gardiner has also largely added to our knowledge of Charles II.'s relations with Montrose at this period in a book called *A Brief Relation*, etc., and published in 1895 by the Scottish History Society.



and Queen Christina. He had never seen Montrose, but probably he had read Wishart's narrative of the Scottish campaign, and had come across men who knew something of the hero of that brilliant story. This had been enough to inspire him with enthusiastic love and admiration for the Great Marquis, and "a desire to spend his life and all that he had under his Excellency's command in the pursuit of so noble an action." He had his desire and died bravely, fighting under the royal standard on the heathy slopes of Ross-shire.

Other letters and documents that have lately been made public, and especially the reports of an English parliamentary spy written from Holland and Belgium, plainly show that Montrose and his movements were a great centre of interest during the best part of 1649 and the early months of the following year. The most exaggerated reports of the number of troops he had enlisted, the ships, arms and ammunitions he had got together were spread abroad and believed in by his friends, and they looked forward confidently to a repetition of the marvellous successes of 1645. On the other hand, the Covenanters declared that there was nothing to be feared, as they knew for a fact that James Grahame had neither men nor money, arms nor ships. But this profession of comfortable indifference did not prevent them from making every exertion to avert the danger which, however they might wish to conceal it from the nation at large, kept their leaders in constant agitation and alarm.

They sent David Leslie with a strong force up to Caithness as soon as they heard of Kinnoul's landing in the Orkneys, but he failed to cross the Pentland Firth, and had to turn south without effecting anything except the sending of a packet of papers to the Earl advising him, "as the best service he could do his Lordship, speedily to retreat to some other country, for his orders were to be severely executed upon him and his party." Kinnoul's only reply was to command the packet to be immediately burnt under the gallows by the hangman; and "my lord was there to see it

done.”\* The Covenanters were more successful in their efforts to injure Montrose in foreign courts. Wherever he applied for help to his cause their emissaries either preceded or quickly followed him, and their plausible representations that Charles’s only hope of restoration lay in his acceptance of the conditions offered him by the Estates, together with their loud professions of loyalty to their young King, made an impression which, in several cases, resulted in the withdrawal of promised help, or in long delays, which were equally prejudicial to Montrose’s plans.

**Nov. 10** In the meantime he had left Copenhagen and sailed for Sweden to try his fortune with the young Queen Christina, the brilliant but eccentric daughter of Gustavus Adolphus. Her private sympathies were at this period with the Royalists, but the celebrated Chancellor Oxenstiern, who practically directed Swedish policy, was resolved to keep on good terms with the real rulers of England, and all the Queen could do for Montrose was to direct her officers not to interfere with his proceedings. He had arrived in Sweden about the 12th of November, and he made the seaport town of Gothenburg his headquarters for the winter. There he found an ardent royalist and a devoted friend in a Scottish merchant named John Maclear, an influential resident and a man of great wealth, who put himself and his riches at Montrose’s disposal in a singularly large-hearted manner. Maclear lent him a sum of £25,000, and became his active and untiring agent in getting together arms, ammunition and ships.

In order not to attract the attention of unfriendly authorities Montrose observed the strictest reserve in all his arrangements, and even in writing to his friends he gave no hint as to what he was doing or planning. This secrecy greatly disturbed the provincial governor of Gothenburg, a man of the name of Ribbingh, who appears to have been something of a busybody. He wrote many letters to his chief and one to the Queen herself, telling them all the details he could gather concerning this mysterious Scottish

\* Gwynne’s *Memoirs*, quoted in *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 258.



count, who gathered round him a number of officers, and had more than one armed ship lying in the harbour, but who resolutely avoided the local officials and "kept himself secret." He reported later on, that other foreign counts, some of them "wretchedly naked," were resorting to General Montrose, and though all the answer he received to these communications was to let Montrose alone, he continued to write, declaring that "he could not understand the man or his business," and hoping devoutly that he might "hit on doing what was Her Majesty's pleasure."\*

Montrose was as anxious to embark as Governor Ribbingh was to get rid of him, for early in December a frigate came from the Orkneys, bringing Lord Morton's brother, Sir James Douglas, and many other Scotsmen of good position from different parts of the kingdom, and they had evil tidings to tell. The Earl of Morton had died suddenly at Birsay Castle on the 12th of November, and a few days later the faithful Kinnoul was stricken with pleurisy and followed his uncle. The Royalists were thus left without accredited leaders, and the organization so prosperously begun by Kinnoul speedily sank into anarchy and confusion. Douglas and his companions earnestly entreated Montrose to go at once to Scotland and not stay for all his men, for "his own presence was able to do the business, and would undoubtedly bring 20,000 men together for the King's service, all men being weary and impatient to live any longer under that bondage, pressing down their estates, their persons and their consciences." The messengers spoke feelingly, for they had themselves experienced the oppression they described. They did not, perhaps, understand that the grinding tyranny of Argyll and the Kirk pressed far more heavily upon men of their class than upon the masses beneath them.

Montrose had, however, no reason to distrust their representations of the eagerness of his countrymen for the

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, pp. 275-6.

deliverance from bondage which he was no less eager to bring them, and on the 15th of December he wrote Lord Seaforth a hasty note, in which he said he was much pressed, as he was to set sail for Scotland the next day. Wind and ice prevented him from carrying out this intention, and it  
 1650 was not until the 10th of January that he went on board the *Herderinnan*, a small frigate he had lately purchased through Maclear from Queen Christina. Governor Ribbingh thought that the troublesome count who had caused him so much anxiety was gone at last, but the ships were wind-bound and could not start. A week went by and the wind changed for a short time to a favourable westerly breeze, but still those three ships lay tossing in the harbour, "and God only knows," wrote Ribbingh, "why he lay still." On the 18th Montrose was back again on shore and lodging in the house of John Maclear, for intensely cold weather had suddenly set in and the ships were caught fast in the ice.

It had been conjectured with much probability that the reason why Montrose "lay still," instead of seizing the opportunity of sailing with the first fair wind to the Orkneys, was that news had reached him of the King's latest dealings with the Covenanters, and that he was waiting for an express messenger from Charles, whom he believed to be on the road to Gothenburg. Harry May, the messenger in question, was supposed by Secretary Nicholas to have started on his journey northwards in December, and a letter from Nicholas had probably conveyed to the Marquis an intimation to this effect, but the express did not really leave Jersey till the 16th of January. Montrose waited in vain until the middle of February, when he sent off at last two of his ships,\* with his two hundred Danish soldiers and most of the arms and ammunition he had collected. He himself remained a few

\* It appears impossible to ascertain how many ships were sent to Orkney. According to some contemporary accounts several were lost with all the men and stores they contained, and those that were lying in Gothenburg Harbour suffered serious damage from the ice. As, however, there is no reference in any of Ribbingh's careful reports to any great disaster, it is probable that the contemporary stories of shipwreck were greatly exaggerated.



days longer in Sweden, but still no express arrived from the King, and on or about February the 22nd he sent his frigate, the *Herderinnan*, round by Marstrand, and travelling overland through Norway, set sail from Bergen for Scotland.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE LAST VENTURE

"He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success  
Found, or earth's failure :  
Wilt thou trust death or not? He answered 'Yes'?"

BROWNING.

**March 1650** WHILE Montrose—still in the dark as to the King's final intentions, but ever faithful to his ruling principle of "Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra"—was sailing over the stormy northern sea, Charles II., in a very different frame of mind, was on his way from Jersey to that meeting with the covenanting commissioners at Breda, upon the results of which the success or failure of Montrose would inevitably depend.

There had been of late a gradually widening split in the camp of the extreme party in Scotland, and Argyll, though still its guiding spirit, had no longer a free hand. He saw clearly enough that it was folly and madness to persist in the old demand of forcing the Presbyterian creed and system, with the Solemn League and Covenant, upon England and Ireland, and he was earnestly bent upon bringing about the return of the young King, for in the recesses of his subtle brain there had arisen a brilliant scheme for his own personal aggrandisement, which was entirely dependent upon this return. If Charles would consent to become his son-in-law,\* Argyll was willing to make all other conditions easy for him. He would join hands with the loyalist party in Scotland, and would even put aside his bitter hatred of Montrose so far as to consent to his being employed against Cromwell in Ireland or England. The scheme of the marriage was kept a profound secret, and was entrusted only to Will Murray, who

\* See Gardiner's *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, vol. i. p. 226. Will Murray offers Anne Campbell' hand.



was one of the six commissioners sent to Breda. Murray and two others represented Argyll and his faction, while the remaining three belonged to the party of Archibald Johnston and the Kirk, who insisted as inflexibly as ever that Charles should consent to all the old unreasonable demands, and above all that he should abandon Montrose.

That Charles never assented to this last condition is proved by the testimony of a keen-sighted and impartial observer who has left a full record of all that he saw and heard, during the early months of 1650, in his assumed position of a courtier attached to the wandering little court of the young King, during the negotiations connected with the Treaty of Breda. This important historical witness was, in reality, an English parliamentary spy, and the graphic reports which he sent every week to his employers in London were published in a newspaper called a *Brief Relation*, which was, for a short time, the official organ of the Council of State in England.\*

The writer of these letters evidently had access to trustworthy sources of information. He was able, on the 2nd of February 1650, to give the substance of a letter which the young King had written to Montrose from Jersey on the 12th of January—a letter not received by the Marquis till the middle of March, and his information concerning Montrose's movements and the number of his followers was much nearer the truth than that possessed by most of the genuine Royalists. According to him the success or failure of Montrose was the pivot upon which everything turned, and the disputes and struggles of the two parties, whom he calls

\* *Charles II. and Scotland in 1650*, edited, with Notes and Introduction, by S. R. Gardiner. A complete series of the *Brief Relation* exists in the British Museum, but copies are so rare that until Dr Gardiner's researches brought to light the extracts given from it in the volume printed in 1894, for the Scottish History Society, the valuable evidence it contains was practically unknown. The English Parliament appears to have had more than one correspondent abroad who sent intelligence concerning Montrose in 1649-50. Dr Gardiner's collection contains many other letters which throw light upon Montrose's attitude and his place in European opinion during these last months of his life, and it gives in its entirety his last letter to Charles II.—a letter of which there had "been previously no antecedent publication at all."

Montrossians and Argyllians, fill many of his pages. Looking at passing events from an entirely English standpoint, he rejoiced in the infatuation of the Scots, who, while they openly defied the newly established Republic in the sister country, were clearing the way for English conquest by the unquenchable feuds they were keeping up among themselves.

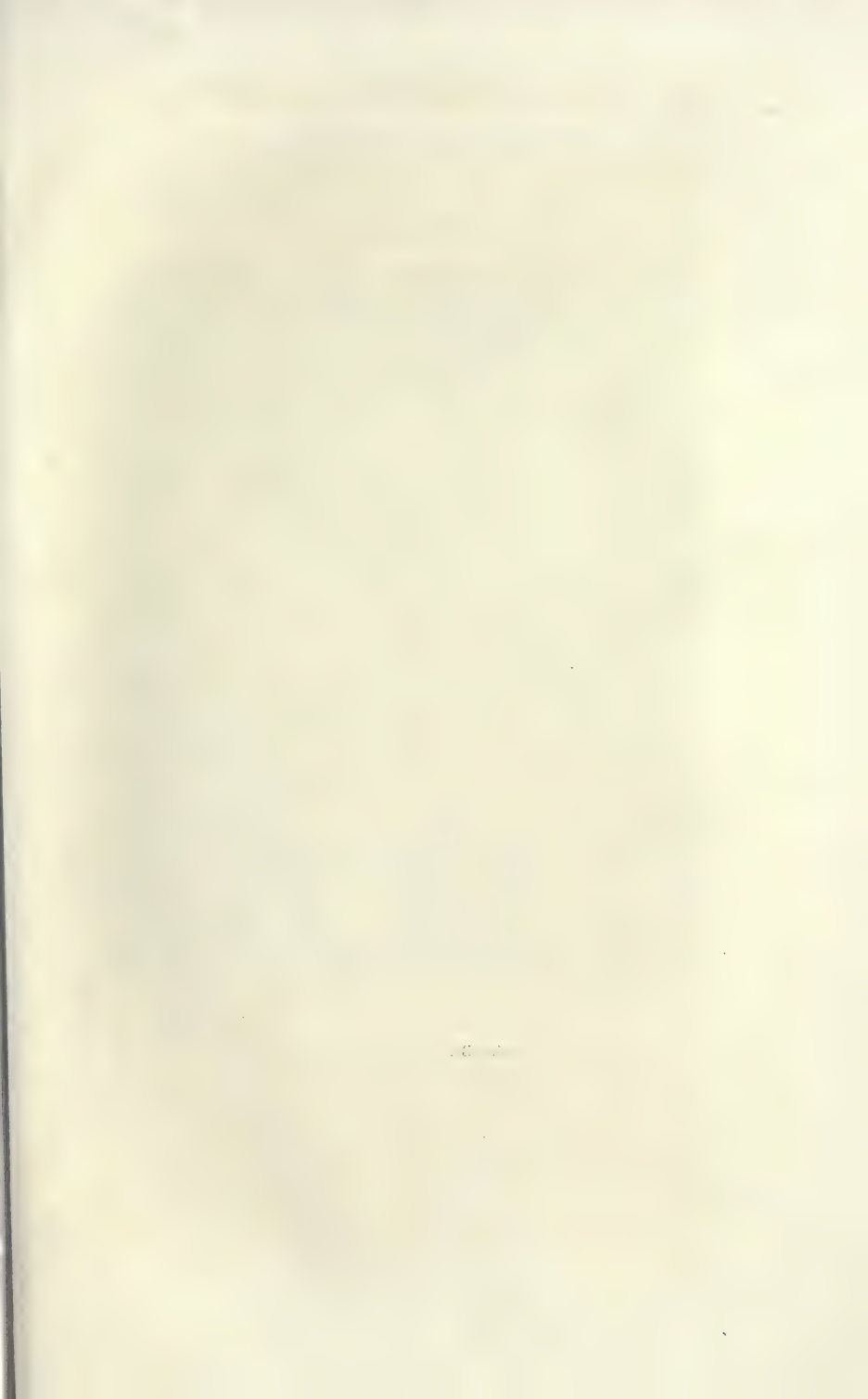
Of Montrose he always speaks with respect, sometimes even with sympathy, but he does not disguise his contempt for the King and the Argyllians, as well as for that third party, headed by Lanerick and Lauderdale, who, while they perfectly hated the Covenant, were willing to combine with both King and Covenanters for "Montrose's undoing." "'Tis evident still," wrote the spy, speaking of the treaty with the Scottish commissioners, "that he" (the King) "perfectly hates them, and neither of them can so dissemble it but that each knows it; and 'tis a matter of pleasant observation to see how they endeavour to cheat and cozen each other." \*

The Queen's influence was all against Montrose and for the Covenanters, though she professed to disapprove of their demand that Charles should himself sign the League and Covenant. She and her favourite, Jermyn, were very angry with Montrose's agent at Paris because he had published † a French translation of the King's letter authorising the Marquis to make war on the Covenanters in Scotland, as she feared, with some reason, that this plain discovery of her son's real wishes and intentions would stand in the way of the treaty with Argyll, which she desired. It was supposed by some that the agent, Wood, had taken this bold step on his own responsibility, but there is much reason to believe that he acted in obedience to secret orders from Jersey. Charles was convinced that nothing but the fear of Montrose's arms would induce the Covenanters to offer him

\* *Charles II. and Scotland*, p. 74.

† A fortnight after the parliamentary spy had sent a précis of its contents to London.







[To face page 365.]

ELISABETH OF BOHEMIA



terms that he could accept without dishonour, and he wished them to know that if they persisted in their unreasonable demands another alternative—that of force—was open to him.

Early in March he met his mother at Beauvais, and she passionately urged him to agree with the Scots on any terms; warning him to avoid “the rock on which his father split himself,” and suggesting—as she had in former days suggested in vain to her husband—that when once he had gained an entrance into his kingdom he would soon be strong enough to throw off any inconvenient obligations. The only exception she made in her advice of a total surrender to the terms offered by the Covenanters was that he should not himself sign the Solemn League and Covenant and thus profess himself a Presbyterian. This would, she felt, scandalize the Roman Catholic courts of Europe, and would, in their eyes, affect Charles’s personal honour. She found a more willing listener to these unscrupulous counsels in her son than she had found in her husband, but he did not at once give in. After being shut up with him for three hours she came out from the conference “very red with anger,” and when he put her into her coach to return to Paris the parting between them was so cold that “the party of Montrose was very joyful.”

The leaders of the “Montrossians” were Ralph, Lord Hopton, and Sir Edward Nicholas, both of them upright and honourable men of stainless character, and they lost no opportunity of urging the harassed young King to adopt a straightforward policy, and to declare openly that if he failed to obtain honourable terms from the Committee of Estates he would trust to the arms of Montrose. Hopton and Nicholas had an ardent ally in Queen Elisabeth of Bohemia, who came herself to Breda to plead the cause of her hero. “The Queen of Boheme will not be content to stay away from the treaty,” wrote the parliamentary spy; “she is passionately affected to Montrose his ends, and will leave no wind unsailed for his effect.” \*

\* *A Brief Relation.*

She found her nephew in a satisfactory frame of mind. Notwithstanding all his mother's importunities he appeared to be still resolved "to stand or fall, to be happy or ruined, with the party of Montrose,"\* and it was for some time his serious purpose to take ship for Scotland and join his faithful general in the north. But he was young, his condition was very desperate, and he had to do with determined and unscrupulous men. The parliamentary spy judged rightly that it would be "necessity or chance that would guide his course."

All his privy councillors, except Hopton and Nicholas, sided with the Scots, and his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange, though he disapproved of the Covenanters' demands, was anxious to get rid of him on almost any terms. Hamilton (Lanerick), though he pretended to be friendly to Montrose, and even wrote to the Marquis that "he would be content to trail a pike or ride a private trooper under him,"† did his best to back up the commissioners; and Lauderdale, Montrose's worst enemy, was always at the young King's elbow to explain away the violence of the Scottish demands, and to suggest, as Henrietta had done, how easy it would be to break promises made to his enemies. Charles's want of principle and his longing for an easy way out of the miseries of his present condition lent weight to Lauderdale's plausible representations. He gave way so far as to banish Hopton and Nicholas from the Council Table, and after this the descent was easy and unchecked.

Will Murray's secret offer of Anne Campbell's hand—though it is most improbable that Charles ever meant to take such a marriage into his serious consideration—appears to have been the last touch that was needed to break down his resolution. On the 1st of May he consented to sign a draft agreement, promising all that was asked of him. It is only fair to the King to state that there is every reason to believe that in coming to terms with the Scots he had (or thought that he had) done all he could to secure Montrose's

\* *Brief Relation.*

† *Ibid.*



safety. A note of Secretary Long's \* shows that an indemnity was promised to all his officers and soldiers, and that Montrose himself was to "stay in safety for a competent time in Scotland, and a ship to lie provided for transporting him where he pleased." To the very end of the negotiations both parties waited anxiously for intelligence from the north, for it was plain to all that "some good news from Montrose would soon spoil the treaty." But no good news, nor indeed any news at all, was forthcoming.

Montrose had landed at Kirkwall before the middle of **March** March, bringing with him a number of officers, amongst whom was Lord Frendraught (a nephew of the covenanting Earl of Sutherland), George Hay, the new Earl of Kinnoul, Sir Francis Hay of Dalgetty, and last but not least his former opponent, Sir John Hurrie. The arrival of the great captain, with his martial following, brought a stir of life and action to the quiet little town in the Orkneys. An oath of allegiance to the young King was at once offered to, and willingly accepted by, the gentlemen and ministers of the county, and a thousand of the islanders flocked to the royal standard, eager to serve under the famous leader of whom they had heard so much during the last few weeks.

Montrose never neglected to appeal to the imagination of his followers, and the standards he brought with him were designed to stir them to loyal indignation, and vividly to set before them the cause for which they were to fight. The colours for the foot showed on a ground of black taffety the head of the martyred King, "bleeding as if newly cut off," with the motto above it, "Deo et victricibus armis."† The cavalry standard, of black damask, represented three pairs of clasped hands (for the three kingdoms), each pair holding a drawn sword, and, "coming out of a blue cloud, the motto, *Quos pietas, virtus, et honor fecit amicos.*" His own standard—strikingly emblematical of the spirit in which he

\* Preserved among the Carte Papers in the Bodleian Library. See Gardiner's *Charles II. and Scotland*, p. 126.

† Above him waved the standard of the dead King rather than of the living.

approached his great enterprise—was of “white damask, on it a lion about to leap from one steep rock to another, and betwixt the two rocks a great river, the motto being ‘Nil Medium.’” \*

Stores of arms were discharged from the ships and distributed among the volunteers, who were being formed into regiments under the direction of Hurrie and of several experienced colonels. Mounted officers rode from one point to another, conveying orders from the commander-in-chief, and making arrangements for the transport of men and munitions of war to the shores of Caithness.

Montrose was still in suspense as to those ominous rumours of a treaty between the King and the Covenanters, which had reached him in Sweden, but his sanguine temper did not incline him to dwell upon the darker side of things, and all that he could gather concerning the actual state of things in Scotland was encouraging to his hopes. A great change had passed over the country since the time, five years earlier, when six brilliant victories had failed to win Scotland for the King. Then, the Covenanters were in close alliance and friendship with the great Puritan party in England. Scottish armies had largely contributed to the success of that party and had shared in its triumphs. English gold was looked to as the means by which the languishing trade and industries of the Lowlands were to be revived, and the fervent belief that their idolized League and Covenant was on the point of being generally embraced in England made the fanatical ministers, who exercised so powerful an influence on their fellow-countrymen, look upon the parliamentary party in England as their “dear brethren.”

In the spring of 1650, however, the wind was blowing from a totally opposite quarter. The Covenant had been contemptuously rejected by their old allies, even by those leading men who, like Cromwell, had signed it when they could not do without the aid of covenanting armies. The

\* Gardiner's *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, vol. i. p. 235.



gold which had indeed flowed into the country after King Charles had been given into the hands of his English rebel subjects had brought no blessing with it, and in some parts of Scotland the people were on the verge of starvation. England was their bitter enemy, and a great Scottish army had—eighteen months earlier—been shamefully defeated by English Puritans. The few miserable survivors who had been allowed to straggle back had terrible tales to tell of their sufferings, and to the broken-hearted women who listened to their sad stories, those who returned must have seemed fortunate indeed compared to the thousands who had been sold and packed off in ships to toil as slaves on West Indian plantations under the broiling sun of Barbadoes. After all this, reconciliation with England under its present rulers was out of the question.

The covenanting party itself was split into two, if not into three, jarring factions, and the rival rulers, each playing for his own hand, vied with each other in exacting the heaviest taxation from the miserable people; while the long arm of the Kirk reached even into the private recesses of domestic life, more than equalling the hated Roman Church in the way of oppressive interference with liberty of thought and action. At this very time scores of ministers were being ousted from their parishes in every part of Scotland because they had favoured, or even because they had not denounced, the "Engagement."\*

If the general state of the country seemed favourable to a rising which had for its object the freeing of the kingdom from the rule of discredited usurpers and the restoration of the old constitutional monarchy, more special encouragement was to be gleaned from the altered state of affairs in the Highlands. Huntly with his obstructive power was gone, and though his successor, the wild Lord Lewis, might be only a superficial friend, he was not likely to hinder the Gordons from serving under the King's appointed representative. Seaforth had distinctly promised Montrose the

\* *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 290.

support of the great Mackenzie following; sure to carry with it the Monroes and Rosses of the north, as it had done in Pluscardine's rising of 1649. The Mackays were expected to add strength to the royal forces, and the ready loyalty of the men of Athole and Badenoch to their old leader was not to be questioned.

There was no doubt that if Montrose could only win through Caithness and Sutherland to the rocky fastnesses of western Ross-shire he would soon become more formidable than he had ever been, and might safely wait for a favourable opportunity to attack the diminished army which was all that the impoverished Committee of Estates at Edinburgh could now maintain. That army, though it could count only about 4500 men, was strong in veteran cavalry, and under David Leslie's leadership was not to be despised, but there is good evidence to show that Middleton, who was in disgrace because of the part he had taken in the Engagement, had promised Montrose that he would bring over the greater part of Leslie's horse to the royalist side. A considerable number of Leslie's troops were suspected of what their leaders called "malignancy," namely, sympathy with the Engagers of 1648, and if the cavalry or any large section of it had joined Montrose he would no longer have had an enemy to contend with in Scotland.

The brilliant hopes which Montrose naturally grounded upon the deep discontent of the country, and the many promises of support he had received, were suddenly dashed to the ground by the arrival of the long-expected express from the King. Harry May must have reached Norway very shortly after Montrose had left it, for he followed him to Scotland and landed at Kirkwall in less than ten days after the arrival of the Marquis. The packet from the King contained a public and formal letter from Charles R. to his "right trusty and entirely beloved cousin," and a private one from his "affectionate friend," together with copies of the correspondence between himself and the Committee of Estates in connection with the treaty of Breda. In both



his letters Charles tried to make it clear to Montrose that nothing in the correspondence enclosed, or in the treaty he hoped to conclude, was to be any impediment to Montrose's proceedings.

On the contrary: "We assure you therefore," he wrote, "that we will not, before or during the treaty, do anything contrary to that power and authority which we have given you by our commission, nor consent to anything that will bring the least degree of diminution to it; and if the said treaty should produce an agreement we will, with our uttermost care, so provide for the honour and interest of yourself, and of all that shall engage with you, as shall let the whole world see the high esteem we have of you, and our full confidence in that eminent courage, conduct and loyalty which you have always expressed to the King, our late dear father of blessed memory, and to us, both by your actions and sufferings for our cause."

He ended by requiring Montrose to "proceed vigorously and effectually in his undertaking," and plainly implied that the presence of a strong body of armed Royalists within the kingdom was the best possible argument to induce his disaffected subjects to moderate their demands, as well as the only means by which they could be forced to listen to reason "in case of their obstinate refusal." As this document had been published in Paris in the middle of February, Argyll and all the members of the Committee of Estates were acquainted with its contents before Montrose saw it, and their intimate knowledge of the terms of his commission renders their subsequent conduct towards him the more inexcusable.

The private note that accompanied the official letter was short and friendly. "I conjure you," wrote the King, "not to take alarm at any reports or messages from others, but to depend upon my kindness and to proceed in your business with your usual courage and alacrity, which I am sure will bring great advantage to my affairs and much honour to yourself."

If Montrose wanted any proof more convincing than

these letters that his exiled Sovereign was satisfied with what he had done already, and hopeful of what he might still achieve, he found it in the high honour Charles conferred upon him by sending him the George and Riband of the Garter. But no personal honour could make up to him for the fatal blow dealt to all his hopes of success by the facts revealed in the King's letter and enclosures. No one knew better than he that the mere report of an impending treaty between the King and the Covenanters must paralyze the action of all the leading Scottish Royalists and prevent them from joining him in arms. But clearly as he saw the new difficulties and dangers that beset him he did not hesitate to obey his Sovereign's commands and to make the great venture.\*

Three days after Harry May's arrival at Kirkwall, Montrose sat down to write his last letter to the young King, and the hurried lines, in which dignity and strong emotion balanced each other, expressed once more that passionate loyalty to a high ideal which looked for no reward but the ultimate success of an impersonal and unselfish aim.

"KIRK WALL IN ORKNEY,  
26th March 1650.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—I received your Majesty's of the 12th of Januar, by Mr May, the 23rd of this present, together with that mark of your Majesty's favour wherewithall you have been pleased to honour me, for which I can make your Majesty no other humble acknowledgment but with the more alacrity and bentsell† abandon still my life to search my death for the interests of your Majesty's honour and service, with that integrity and clearness, as your Majesty and all the world shall see that it is not your fortunes in you, but your Majesty in whatsoever fortune that I make sacred to serve. I will not trouble your Majesty with particulars by this, being (if it please God) in very few days to send some more eminent persons, who shall render your Majesty a full account of all; mean time if I may make bold to let fall to your Majesty a part of my humble thoughts, it should be my wish and humble desires your Majesty would be pleased (from all former experiences) to have a serious eye (now at last) upon the too open crafts are used against you, chiefly in this conjuncture, and that it would please your Majesty to be so just to yourself, as ere you make a resolve upon

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\* "Heavily weighted as he was through Charles's negotiation, it was not in him to despair." Gardiner's "Last Campaign of Montrose," *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1894.

† Force or vigour.



your affairs or your person, your Majesty may be wisely pleased to hear the zealous opinions of your faithful servants, who have nothing in their hearts, nor before their eyes, but the joy of your Majesty's prosperity and greatness, which shall be ever the only passion and study of your most sacred Majesty's most humble, faithful and most passionate subject and servant,

MONTROSE."\*

(Addressed) "For the King's most sacred Majesty."

The haunting fear that the leaders of the Covenant might serve the son as they had served the father seems never to have left Montrose, and his profound distrust of Argyll and his party made him willing to incur any risk, if only he might save the young King from falling into their treacherous hands. With the letter to Charles went one to Seaforth. Knowing how much depended upon the support of the Mackenzies, the Marquis made one last attempt to confirm the resolution of their vacillating chief, who, on the other side of the sea, was watching the course of the negotiations at Breda, and waiting to see what turn events would take before he ordered his brave clansmen to join Montrose. Those orders were never sent, and Seaforth's hesitation turned the scale against the Royalists.

When he wrote the letters to the King and to Seaforth, Montrose was hoping to cross immediately, but it was not easy to get together a sufficient number of boats to convey 1500 men from Holen Sound in the Orkneys to the shores of Caithness, and it was only in exceptionally fine weather that open boats could venture to encounter the tremendous currents of the Pentland Firth. It was the 9th of April before everything was ready, and Montrose, from on board a small ship anchored under the high rocky cliffs of the little island of Flotta, gave his final orders to Major-General Hurrie. Still uncertain as to the reception he might meet with in Caithness, where the influence of the Earl of Sutherland and the St Clairs † was strong for the Covenant, Mon-

\* The letter is full of abbreviations and bears the marks of haste and agitation. It is endorsed in Secretary Nicholas's writing, "26 Martii, The Marq. of Montrose's letter to the King." Gardiner's *Charles II. and Scotland* in 1650.

† Francis St Clair was the man who in 1644, for the sake of a large reward, gave up to the Covenanters his unfortunate relatives the Irvines of Drum, when they had taken refuge in Caithness.

trose ordered Hurrie to select 500 men, the pick of his army, including his own company of Guards, and to set sail with the evening tide for the coast of Caithness. In case they found the whole country in arms to resist them they were to sail round to Strathnaver, and even further if necessary, in the direction of Kintail, where all were for the King. Hurrie, however, landed without opposition, and marching south straight along the coast, in accordance with Montrose's further orders, he secured the Ord, a narrow and difficult pass, which alone gave access from the county to Sutherlandshire.

**April 12** On receiving Hurrie's report of his safe and easy landing, Montrose immediately followed with the rest of the army, and disembarked on the north-east point of Caithness, close to John o' Groats. The inhabitants appeared to take little interest in the movements of the Royalists, and gave no recruits to the cause, but all the gentlemen and heritors of the sherifffdom, with the exception of the St Clairs, consented to take the oath of allegiance, a compromise for which they were afterwards severely called to account. Sir Harry Grahame, with a force of 200 men, was left in charge of this business, while the Marquis marched to Dunbeath Castle, a fortified house on the coast belonging to Sir John St Clair, who had ridden south to procure assistance on the first alarm of Montrose's landing. His lady had remained behind with a small garrison, and she gallantly refused to surrender, but after a siege of only a few days the garrison yielded on fair conditions. Montrose allowed the lady, who would have been an important hostage, to depart with all her baggage, and put in a garrison of his own, who appear to have behaved badly in not observing the conditions agreed upon.

With a reduced force of not more than 800 men the Marquis hastened on, and marching over the narrow and precipitous path overhanging the sea, that led through the Ord of Caithness into Sutherlandshire, he joined forces with Hurrie and the vanguard who had remained to secure this



strong position. Three days later he sent a summons to the Earl's castle of Dunrobin, which at that time consisted of two strong square towers and a fortified gateway. The captain left in command not only refused the summons, but captured a small party of Royalists who had ventured to pass between the castle and the sea. As the castle was strongly garrisoned Montrose did not choose to lose time in another siege, and turning his back upon the sea, he marched westwards.

He was practically without cavalry—for his forty mounted officers could not count for much—and it was all-important that before the enemy could attack him he should gain the Highlands, where his infantry would be beyond the reach of the covenanting horse, and there is every probability that he might have attained this object if he had not been deluded by Seaforth's repeated promises of support. Montrose had striven in vain to induce the Earl to come over and head his brave clan in person, but he had good reason to expect that Mackenzie of Pluscardine, the Earl's brother, who had led an ineffectual rising against the Covenant early in the preceding year, would take the place of his absent chief and bring in a strong reinforcement. There was also some hope that a considerable body of Rosses and Monroes, who were numerous in that part of the country, would offer their services.\* They had, it is true, formerly sided with the Covenant whenever Seaforth so sided, but they shared in the general discontent, and negotiations had been opened with them through Monro of Achness, who had attached himself to Montrose.

Instead, therefore, of making one of those rapid marches, by means of which he had so often foiled the Covenanters in his former campaigns, he lingered in the south of Sutherlandshire, making his way through the beautiful valley of Strathfleet into Strath Oykel, and "thence to Carbisdale, where he stayed some days, expecting to hear from Plus-

\* Their leaders had taken part in the Engagement, and were not yet wholly reconciled to the Kirk.

cardine and the Earl of Seaforth's friends." \* The remains of a small entrenchment, still to be seen on the southern bank of the Kyle of Sutherland, just before it broadens out into a fine sheet of water under the hill of Invercharron, suggest the spot selected by Montrose for his temporary camp, while he was anxiously looking out for the Mackenzies.

According to old style it was still April, but the sun was ten days in advance of the date, and the rapid late spring of the north, with all its exhilarating influence, had begun on the rugged slopes where the Culrain burn issues from the hills. Close behind rose the steep broken ground of Craigchaonichean (The Mossy Hill), thinly covered on its lower slopes with stunted birch trees, and the waters of the burn spread into a bog on the left, while the deep entrenchment protected the front from a cavalry attack. Though Montrose took all these precautions he believed that no covenanting force was within striking distance of his position, for Monro of Achness, who knew the country well and acted as his scout-master, had assured him that in all Ross there was only one troop of the enemy's horse.

In this supposition he was terribly mistaken. Leslie, with his army of four thousand men, was, it is true, far away to the south, for it was not till April the 25th that he left his rendezvous at Brechin. But Colonel Strachan, one of his lieutenants, had already been stationed in the north with an efficient body of cavalry, and on the first report of Montrose's approach he hastened, without waiting for further orders, to Tain, a town within an easy march of the royalist position. Strachan was a capable and dangerous opponent. Disliked and distrusted by Leslie on account of his "sectarian" tendencies and his readiness to criticise and condemn his superior officers, he was a favourite with the ministers of the extreme Presbyterians, who like himself wished to expel from the army everyone less narrow in religion or less democratic in

\* Gordon of Sallagh, a contemporary, and probably eye-witness of these events. He died in 1651. His detailed account has therefore all the freshness of strictly contemporary narrative.



politics than themselves.\* At Tain, Strachan only halted to hold a Council of War, and having ascertained the exact position of the royalist force, he marched straight towards them, while the Monroes and Rosses, to the number of four hundred, still undecided as to which side in the strife they should take, held themselves neutral till they should see which party was going to be successful.

Saturday, the 27th of April (old style), found Montrose April 27 and his little army still watching and waiting under the shadow of Craigchaonichean; but early in the afternoon of that day a small reconnoitring party was sent out under Major Lisle to ascertain whether there was yet any sign of friend or foe to be seen on the crescent-shaped undulating ground stretching along the Kyle, which was the only approach for cavalry from the south. Lisle came back before long with the news that he had sighted a troop of cavalry at no great distance, but there was nothing very alarming in this intelligence, for Montrose had no reason to suspect that the horsemen seen by Lisle were only a small part of the strong body of cavalry which was cautiously advancing along the shore from Wester Fearn, or that Strachan, warned by his scouts of the approach of the little party of cavaliers, had succeeded in keeping the rest of his forces in ambush among the tall broom that grows luxuriantly along the lower slopes of the hills in this district.

Whatever Montrose's intentions may have been, his action on receiving Lisle's intelligence was prompt and unhesitating. Drawing out his army in marching order, he led the main body himself, and giving the van to Sir John Hurrie, he followed the route which the reconnoitring party had already taken.

But he had waited too long for the lagging Mackenzies, and it was already too late for escape. Before the Royalists had covered three miles they came in sight of the advancing Covenanters. With one glance Montrose comprehended the extreme peril of the situation. This was no single troop, but

\* Less than a year after this date Strachan's tendencies had developed to such an alarming extent that he was solemnly excommunicated and "given to the devil" in the Church of Perth by Mr Alexander Rolloch.

a strong body of cavalry, against which no ordinary infantry of that day, still less his untried Orkney levies, could stand with any chance of success upon open ground. The only possibility of defence lay in regaining the strong position he had so lately abandoned, and he at once gave the order to fall back upon the "scroggie wood" at the base of Craigchaonichean. But the Covenanters came on too fast; the mounted cavaliers were too few in number to cover the retiring foot, and the retreat became a rout. The raw levies from the Orkneys, terrified by the rapid approach of the galloping Covenanters, flung down their arms and fled in wild confusion. Two hundred of them were drowned in trying to cross the Kyle, and a large number were slain in the flight. The Danish and German troops succeeded in retiring in some sort of order to the lower slopes of "The Mossy Hill," but the trees of the "scroggie wood" were too scanty to give them much shelter, and after firing one feeble and ineffectual volley they also threw down their arms and surrendered.\*

The brunt of the battle fell upon the forty gallant cavaliers who gathered round their heroic leader and made with him a desperate stand rather for honour than for life. Young Menzies, who bore the ghastly royal standard, one of the brave Douglasses, and many others of his chief officers, fell dead at his side; he himself was wounded and his horse shot under him. At that critical moment the young Lord Frendraught pressed his own horse upon his dismounted general, and Montrose, knowing that Frendraught's uncle, the Earl of Sutherland, would secure his nephew's safety, accepted the generous offer, and late in the evening fought his way out of the disastrous field.

The little army was annihilated. The pursuit continued

\* For a spirited account of the fight and flight at Carbisdale, v. Deeds, 307-8. The contemporary records of the disaster were written from the covenanting point of view by Strachan himself, and by Gordon of Sallagh, and both are scanty in detail except as to the movements of the covenanting force. The only royalist account of the affair was published two years later by the unknown author of *Montrose Redivivus*. He says that, hearing of the approach of the enemy, Montrose was trying by a rapid march "to recover a pass" not far off when he was surprised by Strachan.



for two hours, and the Monroes and Rosses, who had hung back till the fate of the day was decided, aided the more civilized soldiers of the Covenant in the slaughter of the hapless men of Orkney. More than sixty officers and over four hundred men were taken prisoner, most of them being foreigners. They were carried off by the victors to Tain the same night, and Strachan himself rode straight to Edinburgh to give an account of his great exploit and claim his reward.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### FLIGHT AND CAPTURE

" Mine honour holds the weather of my fate.  
Life every man holds dear ; but the dear man  
Holds honour far more precious dear than life."

SHAKESPEARE, *Troilus and Cressida*.

**April 27** BEFORE he was clear of the field, Montrose threw off his coat with its glittering star, which made him too conspicuous a mark for the enemy. Lord Kinnoul, Major Sinclair and several others of his officers accompanied him in his flight, and the gathering dusk of the evening enabled them to evade their pursuers, and to gain a comparatively safe position in the hills; but the climbing soon became so steep that they had to abandon their horses. In the hope of making their way to the Reay country, where they would be among friends, Montrose and two of his companions in misfortune swam the River Oykel, which was swollen by the heavy rains of an unusually wet spring, and all that night and all the next day they followed the windings of the Strath. Either for greater security or by accident, the wanderers soon separated from each other, and Montrose, who had by this time exchanged clothes with a Highland shepherd, found himself alone among the mountains. Kinnoul is said to have died of starvation in that wilderness, but no trace of his body was ever found.

It appears certain that the hot pursuit after Montrose obliged him frequently to hide himself in the daytime, so that on the second day of his flight he was not many miles away from the scene of his great disaster. Not daring to venture near any human habitation, he had no means of procuring food of any kind, but of water there was plenty, for every



hollow in the bare and rocky hills of that desolate region holds its dark little tarn.

If, however, we may trust a tradition preserved in a family of the name of Milbourne, who in 1650 lived upon a small estate on the confines of Ross and Sutherland, Montrose was on one occasion driven by sheer starvation to approach a house whose master he knew to be loyal to the King and friendly to himself. It was night when the Marquis, almost unrecognisable from the sufferings he had undergone, and the shepherd's dress in which he was disguised, discovered himself to John Milbourne, the head of the family; but before he would accept the shelter that was at once offered him he warned his would-be host of the great risk he incurred in entertaining him.

Milbourne eagerly assured the Marquis that he was only too glad to be able to assist him in any way, and upon this, Montrose asked to be concealed in some secret place as soon as possible, for he knew his enemies were scouring the country in pursuit and they would probably soon search Milbourne's house. The farm was ill provided with hiding-places, and Milbourne could not think of anything better for the purpose than a large broken stone trough which lay aslant in a half dried up muddy pool. As the house stood high, and no one could approach within a mile of it without being seen, it is probable that while the Marquis was being served with the food he so sorely needed his faithful host was on the look-out for suspicious-looking strangers, for after giving his guest a short refreshment, Milbourne hastily laid him in the trough, covering him with clean straw, but for safety's sake throwing some that was dirty on and about the strange hiding-place.

Hardly had he had time to wash and wipe his hands before a party of Covenanters came up to the house to inquire if any of the inmates had seen Montrose. After they had searched the outbuildings they were passing on to the house, when one of the party noticed the big trough piled up with dirty straw, and cried out in a kind of frolic, "What is there?" Then, walking straight into the mud in which it lay, he

"jabbed" his sword into the straw between the Marquis's legs, and satisfied that no one could be hidden in "so filthy a thing," he went on with the rest to search the house. They examined every hole and corner about the place, running their swords into the beds, and "behaving with great insolence and cruelty." After eating and drinking whatever they chose to seize, they at length departed, threatening Milbourn with terrible consequences in case he should ever be found to have concealed "James Grahame."

As soon as they were safely gone Milbourn released the Marquis from his uncomfortable hiding-place, and found him "all over in a violent perspiration." "Oh, my dear friend Milbourn," he exclaimed, "I never knew I was a coward before; I endangered the lives of you and yours, in the manner I have done, to save my own." He said he was "determined never to do the like again to avoid death, of which, he thanked God, he was not afraid." Then taking a little more refreshment, he asked for a prayer-book, and went into a private room "to prepare himself for death and to make his peace with God." At night he took an affectionate leave of Milbourn and his family, "loading him with thanks and all possible gratitude for his particular kindness and friendship to him." He further said "he would go a contrary way from the house, to prevent suspicion, to the Laird of Assynt, with whom he wished to speak of his family affairs as having been a friend and follower of his."

It is said that when it became known that Milbourn had concealed Montrose, he had to flee with his wife and family to an obscure part of Scotland, and the cruel death of "the most noble Marquis, for whom he had the utmost affection," so preyed on his health that he fell into a decline and died a few months afterwards.\*

\* The story is taken from an MS. sent some years ago to Dr S. R. Gardiner the historian, by whom it was communicated to Dr Morland Simpson of Aberdeen. Dr M. Simpson published the MS. in a volume of miscellaneous papers (vol. xv. of the Scottish History Society's publications), and he is of opinion that not only is the episode "described with a simplicity and directness which give it a strong air of verisimilitude," but that there is not in the events







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ARDVRECK CASTLE (LOCH ASSYNT)



Montrose reached the Assynt country on the third day of his flight, and it must have been soon after the adventure at Milbourne's farm that he "fortuned in his misery to light upon a small cottage in that wilderness where he was supplied with some bread and milk," \* for this cottage is said to have been "a small hut, occasionally occupied for dairy purposes by one of Assynt's tenants at a grazing farm known by the name of Glaschyle." † He had hardly lost sight of the hut when he saw five or six men coming towards him, and knowing that he could not escape them, he sat down, and waiting till they came up he asked them, without saying anything to betray himself, the way to the Reay country. They were a party expressly sent out from Assynt to search for the Marquis, but with the ready guile of the Celt they pretended to suspect nothing, and willingly offered to guide him in the direction he wished to take.

They walked on for some seven or eight miles, and in the lofty mountain peaks which they were approaching, Montrose, if he believed in the good faith of his guides, may well have seen a secure haven, where, among friendly Highlanders, he might rest awhile and prepare for new efforts. He saw at last before him a lake with a long low tongue of land running out into the still water, and on this narrow peninsula stood a small strongly built fortress. The chisel-dressed stone at the angles of the building, and a circular tower projecting from one corner, showed that the house belonged to a chief of some consequence, and when Montrose asked its name he was told that it was Ardvreck Castle. He knew then that his guides had played him false, but a gleam of hope still remained. Ardvreck belonged to Neil Macleod, who some years earlier had, as a boy of eighteen, served under his superior, the Earl of Seaforth, with Montrose at the siege of

described any fact inconsistent with our knowledge of what did occur during the few days that intervened before Montrose reached the fatal castle of Neil Macleod. It must however be added that no trace has yet been found of any family named Milbourne then resident in the district, nor is the "pedigree" of the MS. known before it fell into Dr Gardiner's hands.

\*. Gordon of Sallagh.

† *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 312 ; Gordon of Sallagh.

Inverness, and the Marquis supposed him to be still friendly to the royal cause. He was not aware that the Laird of Assynt had recently transferred his allegiance to the Earl of Sutherland, a close ally of the Covenanters. Macleod had also married a daughter of Monro of Lemlair, who had actively assisted Strachan in the late attack at Carbisdale.

According to tradition, it was the lady and not the laird who received the worn and weary wanderer, for Neil was away in the North,\* but he returned almost immediately, and any remnant of hope Montrose may still have retained was soon ruthlessly dispelled. Macleod and his wife saw in the captured General only a means of enriching themselves by means of the sum of money set upon Montrose's head. It is some satisfaction to learn that Neil's ill-gotten gains brought no luck to him or his house. He spent several of his later years in prison, and litigation pursued him to the end of his life. In 1674 he was violently dispossessed of the property by the Earl of Seaforth, and Neil's wife—the dark daughter of Lemlair—in her despair, set fire to the castle, which has ever since remained an uninhabited ruin.

Seeing clearly that he was a prisoner, Montrose tried, by persuasion and by offers of large reward, to induce Assynt to come with him to the Orkneys, but all in vain. He was led into one of the two vaulted cellars which formed the lowest portion of the building, and the heavily barred and bolted doors shut out all chance of escape. For four days and nights Montrose remained a prisoner in this gloomy vault, and it was well for him that he had trained himself not to "fear his fate too much," for the certain prospect of what lay before him was enough to have crushed the spirit of any meaner man. During part of the time he probably had the company of Major Sinclair, who was brought in by some of Assynt's men not long after the arrival of his leader at Ardvreck.

\* When put upon his trial after the Restoration, he pleaded an alibi, but in 1650 he had taken on himself the entire credit and responsibility for Montrose's capture. There is no reasonable doubt of his complicity in the matter, and it is certain that he claimed and obtained the reward. The account of the lady's share in the business is chiefly gathered from Mr Taylor's MS. at Dunrobin.



On the Wednesday or Thursday after the battle, Assynt sent off a messenger to Tain to apprise Leslie of his capture of Montrose. Leslie, who had been marching thirty miles a day since he had left Brechin on the 25th, had heard the report of his subaltern's easy and decisive victory with mingled feelings. He reached Tain about the same time as the messenger from Ardvreck, and lost no time in securing his important prisoner, who might easily have been rescued by a small band of determined men if Sir Harry Grahame and the other officers, left to keep order in Caithness and Orkney, had discovered in time that their lost leader was shut up in a small fortress near the Assynt coast, with "no more for a guard upon him than were the family and servants of the house wherein he was in restraint." \* Leslie despatched a party of troopers under Major-General Holbourn to Assynt, and on Saturday, the 4th of May, Montrose was formally given into the hands of his enemies. The following day Holbourn conveyed his prisoner as far as the Bridge of Oykel, and thence on Monday to Skibo Castle, on the north side of the Dornoch Firth, four miles from Tain. Here they made a two days' halt, and the tragedy of the story is relieved by a laughable incident which is said to have taken place almost immediately on the arrival of Montrose and his guard.

The lady of the castle, a dowager named Gray, presided herself at the dinner-table, at the head of which, and immediately before her, was a leg of roast mutton. When Montrose entered the room (still in the mean disguise of a Highland shepherd) he was introduced to her by the officers who escorted him, and she requested him to be seated next to her; but Holbourn, still retaining the strict military order he observed on his march, placed the Marquis between himself and another officer, and thus he sat down at Lady Skibo's right hand, and above his noble prisoner, before the lady was aware of the alteration. She no sooner observed this arrangement than she flew into a violent passion, seized the leg of roast mutton by the shank and hit Holbourn such a

\* Gwynne's narrative, quoted in Appendix to *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 497.

notable blow on the head, with the flank part of the hot juicy mutton, as knocked him off his seat and completely spoiled his uniform. The officers took alarm, dreading an attempt to rescue the prisoner, but the lady, still in great wrath, and brandishing the leg of mutton, reminded them that she received them as guests, and that as such, and as gentlemen, they must accommodate themselves to such an adjustment of place at her table as she considered to be correct; that, although the Marquis was a prisoner, she was more resolved to support his rank when unfortunate than if he had been victorious, and consequently, that no person of inferior rank could, at her table, be permitted to take precedence of him. Order being restored, and the mutton replaced on the table, every possible civility was thereafter directed by all present towards the Marquis.\*

Two days later, on the 8th of May, Holbourn delivered Montrose into David Leslie's keeping, and the long train of prisoners began their painful march to Edinburgh.

\* Mr Taylor, Dunrobin MS. ; *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 315.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### MARTYRDOM

"He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Though cursed, and scorned and bruised with stones :  
But looking upward full of grace  
He prayed, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him in the face."

TENNYSON.

WHEN Montrose was given up to David Leslie, he was suffering from his wounds and from the terrible privations he had undergone in his flight from the battle-field, but pain and weariness were a light burden compared to the mental distress he was enduring. The downfall of all his hopes before he had been able even to strike a blow for his country and his King, the dark future which threatened both, and the ruin in which his defeat had involved so many of his friends and followers—all these things touched his generous heart with a deeper pain than any he could feel for his own fate. Yet never did his dauntless courage shine out more clearly than when, a helpless prisoner in the hands of his relentless enemies, he was carried in triumph from one town to another in his weary progress to Edinburgh.

He was not allowed for some time to put off the mean disguise in which he had been taken, but petty humiliations of this kind had no power to disturb the patient dignity of Montrose, though he would have been more than human if he had not suffered keenly under the insults that were heaped upon him.

A detailed account of the melancholy journey was written by James Frazer, a young man who sixteen years later became chaplain to the Lord Lovat of that day. Frazer accompanied the covenanting general and his long train of

prisoners for part of the way in their slow march towards Edinburgh, and his story, full of quaint realistic touches, gives a more vivid picture of Montrose and his surroundings than any more modern narrative could present. The writer belonged to a clan which had been opposed in arms to the royalist commander, but his whole sympathy was with the prisoners, and the admiration roused in him by the noble and steadfast demeanour of the Marquis was shared by many of the more moderate Covenanters, though at the time all open expression of such feelings was rigidly suppressed.

"Montrose," writes Frazer, "being now in the custody of his mortal enemies, from whom he could expect no favour, yet expressed a singular constancy, and, in a manner, a carelessness of his own condition. He was conveyed with a guard over the River Conan towards Beaulieu. Crossing that river they refreshed them at Lovat, such scurvy, base indignities put all along upon him as reached the height of reproach and scorn.

"But now I set down that which I was myself eye-witness of. The 9th of May 1650, at Lovat, he sat upon a little sheltie horse, without a saddle, but a quilt of rags and straw, and pieces of rope for stirrups, his feet fastened under the horse's belly with a tether, a bit halter for a bridle; a ragged old dark reddish plaid, a montero cap on his head, a musketeer on each side, and his fellow-prisoners on foot after him.

"Thus conducted through the country near Inverness, under the road to Muirtown, where he desired to alight, he called for a draught of water, being then in the crisis of a high fever. And here the crowd from the town came forth to gaze. The two ministers,\* Mr John Armand, wait here upon him to comfort him, the latter of which the Marquis was well acquainted with. At the end of the bridge, stepping forward, an old woman, Margaret MacGeorge, exclaimed and brauted, saying: 'Montrose, look above; view these ruinous houses of mine which you occasioned to be burnt down when

\* Only one is named. The other was William Cloggie. *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 316, note.



you besieged Inverness!’ Yet he never altered his countenance, but with a majesty and state befitting him kept a countenance high.

“At the Cross, a table covered. The Magistrates treat him with wine, which he would not taste, but allayed with water. The stately prisoners, his officers, stood under a forestair and drank heartily. I remarked Colonel Hurry, a robust, tall, stately fellow, with a long cut on his cheek. All the way through the streets Montrose never lowered his aspect. The Provost, Duncan Forbes, taking leave of him at the town’s end, said, ‘My Lord, I am sorry for your circumstances.’ He replied, ‘I am sorry for being the object of your pity.’ The Marquis was conveyed that night to Castle Stewart,\* where he lodged.

“From Castle Stewart the Marquis is conveyed through Moray. By the way some loyal gentlemen wait upon his Excellency most avowedly with grieved hearts. [Among them was Captain Thomas Mackenzie of Pluscarden, Lord Seaforth’s brother.] He was overjoyed to see these about him, and they were his guard forward to Forres, where the Marquis was treated, and thence, afternoon, convoyed to Elgin city, where all these loyal gentlemen waited on him, and diverted him all the time with allowance of the General.†

“In the morning, Mr Alexander Somers, parson of Duffus, waited on him at Elgin, being college acquaintance with the Marquis; four years his con-disciple at St Andrews. This cheered him wonderfully as the parson often told me. Thence they convoyed him all the way to the River Spey, and a crowd of loyalists flocked about him unchallenged. Crossing Spey they lodged all night at Keith, and next day, 12th May, being the Sabbath, the Marquis heard sermon there. A tent was set up in the fields for him, in which he lay. The minister, Master William Kinanmond, altering his ordinary, chose for his theme and text the words of Samuel the Prophet to

\* About five miles from Inverness. Now a ruin. *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 317, note.

† The General appears to have been Holbourn, not Leslie, who had gone north. *Deeds*, p. 318, note.

Agag, the king of the Amalekites, coming before him delicately: 'And Samuel said, as thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women,' etc. This unnatural, merciless man so rated, reviled and reflected upon the Marquis, in such invective, virulent and malicious manner, that some of the hearers who were even of the swaying side condemned him. Montrose, patiently hearing him a long time, and he insisting still, said, 'Rail on, Ra[bshakeh],' and so turned his back to him in the tent. But all honest men hated Kinanmond for this ever after. Montrose desired to stay in the fields all night, lying upon straw in the tent till morning."

This Sunday was the eighth day of the journey, and except for the two days' halt at Skibo Castle, the distance covered each day had been from twenty to over thirty miles. As the whole march was done at a foot pace, this meant for Montrose, ill and fevered as he was, not less than ten hours each day in his uncomfortable position on the back of the miserable little "sheltie" that carried him. It was not surprising that he was glad to lie "upon straw in the tent" as long as the Sabbath halt lasted. Up to this point Frazer had been an eye-witness of what he described. Of the remainder of the journey he gives a less detailed report.

"Monday after, they march through the Mearns, south. By the way the Marquis came to his father-in-law's house, the Earl of Southesk [Kinnaird Castle], where he visited two of his own children.\* But neither at meeting nor at parting could any change of his former countenance be seen, or the least expression heard which was not suitable to the greatness of his spirit and the fame of his former actions' worth and valour. At Dundee, where he stayed one night, he was supplied with decent clothes by some friends."

During the fortnight that the journey lasted every precaution was taken to prevent any attempt at a rescue, but on one occasion a woman's devotion nearly baffled the

\* Robert and David, boys of fourteen and twelve. *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 319, note.



watchfulness of the Covenanters. On the day which witnessed the parting of Montrose from his children at Kinnaird Castle, the march was a long one—thirty-one miles—and the General in command, instead of pressing on to Dundee, halted within five miles of the town, to pass the night at the house of the Laird of Grange, whose wife, Jean Ochterlonie, is described as a “true-hearted and loyal gentlewoman.” There was something in Montrose’s personality which had an irresistible attraction for “true-hearted” women; witness the ardent admiration and affection he inspired in Elisabeth of Bohemia and in the ladies of the Napier family. Hardly had he crossed the Lady of Grange’s threshold before she resolved to effect his escape, and so skilfully did she lay her plans that but for a mischance impossible to foresee the scheme would have succeeded.

“Once more his foot on Highland heath had trod, as free as air !”

The lady, under the pretence of hospitality, supplied the officers and soldiers of the guard, tired out with three unbroken days of forced marches, with strong ale and brandy in such quantities that before midnight they were all “stark drunk.” The sentinels were asleep, and the main guard, quartered in the great hall of the mansion, lay about on the floor “like swine on a midden.” The lady had succeeded in persuading Montrose to put on some of her own garments, and in this disguise he passed all his guards. He was almost clear of the house when a trooper from outside, who had been present at his capture, happened to come “rammeling in for his bellieful of drinke,” and unluckily stumbled upon the Marquis, and recognised him in spite of his feminine attire. The soldier immediately roused some of the guards and Montrose was seized and rudely turned back to his prison chamber. The laird and lady, with their whole household, were locked up for the night, and strictly examined next morning, but the lady declared herself the sole contriver of the plot, and said she was heartily sorry that the noble prisoner had not escaped according to her desire. Her boldness and resolu-

tion called forth some admiration even from the Covenanters, and they contented themselves with taking security from the laird that she should appear when called for before the Committee of Estates.\*

**May 18** On Saturday the 18th of May, three days after the halt at Grange, the Firth of Forth was crossed and the prisoner landed at Leith. There Montrose was mounted on a cart-horse, his forty officers followed on foot, and the sad procession passed on to the city by the watergate of the Abbey.

Before Montrose reached Edinburgh the shadow of disappointment and distress had passed away from his "clear spirit." He had looked his failure in the face and had satisfied himself that, disastrously as his last attempt to save the monarchy had ended, he had no cause to regret his own part in it. It was hard, in the full vigour of manhood, to bid a last farewell to his two boys, and to all earthly hopes and happiness, but the idea of death had already grown familiar, and the highest consolation came to him in the thought that he was called to suffer and die for the cause which in life he had striven to uphold—the cause of Religion, Liberty and Loyalty. From that time no insult, no physical pain, no petty persecution had power to ruffle his calm endurance. The quiet smile that lighted up the pale worn face and keen grey eyes during his painful progress through the streets of Edinburgh was attributed by a French observer—M. de Graymond—to disdain of the insults heaped upon him, but it was in truth only the expression of an inward peace too deep to be touched by any thought of bitterness or disturbed by the hatred of his triumphant enemies.

It was about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon when the slow procession from Leith reached the lower end of the Canongate, at that time considered a suburb of the town, with the tall stone houses of the nobility lining each side of the wide street and long gardens sloping down behind. At

\* *Memoirs of the Somervilles*, written in 1674 by the son of an officer who had spent a fortnight at the house of the Laird of Grange within four months of the occurrence of the incident, and had thus heard the story from several of the actors in it. See *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 319, note.



the entrance to the Canongate, under the Netherbow, stood a cart specially prepared for the occasion, in charge of the hangman, and close at hand stood a small group of the Edinburgh magistrates, who came forward, when the Marquis dismounted, to show him his sentence—an Act “ordaining James Graham to be brought from the Watergate, on a cart, bareheaded; the hangman in his livery, covered, riding on the horse that draws the cart; the prisoner to be bound to the cart with a rope—to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, and from thence to be brought to the Parliament House, and there on his knees to receive sentence: viz., To be hanged on the gibbet at the Cross of Edinburgh, with his book and declaration tied in a rope round his neck, and there to hang for the space of three hours, until he were dead; and thereafter to be cut down by the hangman, his head, hands and legs to be cut off and distributed as follows: viz., his head to be affixed on an iron pin and set on the gavel of the new prison of Edinburgh, one hand to be set on the port of Perth, the other on the port of Stirling; one leg and foot on the port of Aberdeen, the other on the port of Glasgow. If he were at his death penitent and relaxed from excommunication, then the trunk of his body to be interred by pioneers in the Greyfriars, otherwise to be interred in the Boroughmuir by the hangman’s men under the gallows.” \*

Montrose read the barbarous sentence through with the greatest composure, and returned the paper with the remark that he was sorry that through him the King, whose commission he bore, should be dishonoured. He then cheerfully mounted the cart, on which “there was framed for him a high seat in fashion of a chariot, upon each side of which

\* Had Argyll allowed even a short delay the remonstrances of foreign courts might have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Covenanters to carry out the barbarous sentence. One attempt was actually made to save Montrose. As soon as it was known in Paris that he had fallen into the hands of his enemies, a powerful appeal was drawn up in his behalf and signed by the young King, Louis XIV. In this State paper it was urged that Montrose’s “conduct had on all occasions been characterised by great prudence, honour and virtue,” and that “he had done no more than devote himself in a most generous spirit to his paramount duty in fulfilling the commands of the King, his sovereign Lord and yours.” It came too late.

were holes. Through these a cord being drawn, crossing his breast and arms, bound him fast in that mock chair." His hands were securely tied so that if, as the rulers expected, the people should fling stones at him, "he might not save his face."

The hangman, having taken off Montrose's hat, mounted the horse and began the slow ascent; the other prisoners, tied two and two, walking before the cart. The wide street was crowded with people, many of them belonging to the lowest class, but "there appeared in him such majesty, courage and modesty, and even somewhat more than natural, that those common women who had lost their husbands and children in his wars were, upon the sight of him, so astonished and moved, that their intended curses turned into tears and prayers, so that the next day the ministers preached against them for not stoning and reviling him."

The same witness \* relates that "Lord Lorn and his new lady were sitting in a balcony, joyful spectators, and, the cart being stopped when it came before the lodging where the Chancellor (Loudon), Argyll, and Warristoun sat—that they might have time to insult—he, suspecting the business, turned his face toward them; whereupon they presently crept in at the window. Which being perceived by an Englishman, he cried up, it was no wonder they turned aside at his look, for they durst not look him in the face this seven years bygone!"

This striking incident is confirmed by a letter written to Cardinal Mazarin five days afterwards by M. de Graymond, the French spectator already referred to. He mentions the fact that the house in which Argyll and his friends had stationed themselves belonged to the Earl of Moray. That house, uninjured by time, may still be seen in the Canongate of Edinburgh, with its heavy stone balcony outside the window where Argyll sat on that May afternoon in 1650 waiting to enjoy the spectacle of his once dreaded enemy dragged in triumph through the main street of the Scottish capital on his

\* This account is taken from the record of an eye-witness preserved among the Wigton Papers at Cumbernauld, and printed in Mr Mark Napier's *Memoirs* and in *Deeds of Montrose*.



way to the common gaol of the city. Argyll's triumph was less satisfactory than he had hoped it would be, for it was a great mistake on his part to suppose that by such measures as he had adopted he could humiliate Montrose, either in his own eyes or in those of the spectators. He had seized the opportunity of exhibiting his defeated enemy as a condemned felon and traitor, and had expected to see him broken in spirit and overwhelmed with shame and disgrace, but even he could not fail to perceive that every added circumstance of insult and ignominy only brought out in stronger relief the unmistakable nobility of the man whom he was vainly trying to degrade.

The fact, known to many of that crowd of gazers, that the bareheaded prisoner, tied with ropes to his high seat, to be an object of scorn and mockery to all who beheld him, was, by the appointment of their acknowledged sovereign, Governor-General of Scotland and Knight of the noble Order of the Garter, hardly increased the deep impression left upon the beholders of the strange spectacle. It was the innate dignity, the undaunted spirit, of Montrose that touched the hearts of his countrymen and compelled the admiration even of his enemies.

It was past seven o'clock in the evening when Montrose entered the Tolbooth, "where he was so closely shut up that none of his dearest friends were suffered to come nigh him." \* Late as it was, the Parliament met, and sent some of their members, with two ministers, to examine him, but he refused to answer any of their questions until he should be told upon what terms they stood with the King. "Which being reported to the Parliament, they delayed proceedings against him till Monday, and allowed their commissioners to tell him that the King and they were agreed," and "the King coming here to this country." It was late in the evening when the commissioners left Montrose, and being extremely tired and worn, "he desired that night to be at rest, for he was wearied with a longsome journey, and, he said, 'the

\* *Montrose Redivivus.*

compliment they had put upon him that day was somewhat tedious.' ”

The next day being Sunday, the “ appointed ministers of religion prayed for his conversion ” in their pulpits, but prayers of this description were apt to become a convenient vehicle for abuse and denunciation of the person supposed to be prayed for, and, according to more than one contemporary authority, some of the more bigoted ministers did not fail to use the opportunity in this manner. Among their hearers, however, there must have been many upon whose memories the pale noble face and bound figure in the cart had left an impression not to be dispelled by the rancour of their teachers.

Montrose was not allowed to spend the last Sunday of his life in the rest and quiet that his condition required. Ministers of the Kirk and members from the Estates came to satisfy their curiosity or their malevolence, and all through the day he was persecuted with reproaches and idle questions. Yet no impatient expression escaped his lips. He told them that “ if they thought they had affronted him the day before by carrying him in a cart, they were much mistaken, for he thought it the most honourable and joyful journey that ever he made, God having all the while most comfortably manifested His presence to him, and furnished him with resolution to overlook the reproaches of men.” \*

“ He was very frequent at his devotions while he was in prison,” says a contemporary account published two years after his death, “ and was more cheerful than he had been since he was taken prisoner.”

By eight o'clock on Monday morning three or four ministers, including Mr James Guthrie and Mr Robert Traill, who were among the most virulent of their class, were in the Marquis's cell, by commission of the Assembly, to question and examine him. With them came a young man named Patrick Simpson, who afterwards became a well-known minister and rose to the position of Moderator of the General

\* Wigton MS.



Assembly. The scene made so deep an impression upon his mind that sixty years later he could give a detailed account of the interview to Robert Wodrow, the enthusiastic apologist of the later race of Covenanters. Wodrow, who took down Mr Simpson's account as he spoke it, remarks that the old man's memory was so good that his relation might be depended upon, and it is not improbable that Simpson had kept some notes of what had been said on so interesting and important an occasion. Certain it is that his record of Montrose's words and demeanour is, on the whole, in striking harmony with every other contemporary witness on the subject.

Addressing the Marquis as "Sir" (for as he was excommunicated and forfeited they were careful to give him none of his titles) the ministers began by reproving him "for his aspiring and lofty temper," and for "his personal vices," though of these latter, as we now understand the term, there is no trace to be found in any part of his life. They went on to instance "his taking a commission from the King to fight against his country," "his taking Irish and Popish rebels by the hand," and lastly, "the sport and ravage his men made through the country, also the much blood shed by his cruel followers."

"Montrose heard them patiently" to the end, and defended himself "handsomely, as he well could do," intermixing a few Latin quotations, which showed that he had kept up his familiarity with the classical writers after he had left St Andrews. "As to the taking of those men to be his soldiers, who were Irish papists, he said it was no wonder that the King should take any of his subjects who would help him, when those who should have been his best subjects deserted and opposed him. "We see," said he, "what a company David took to defend him in the time of his strait." "As to his men's spoiling and plundering the country, he answered, they knew that soldiers who wanted pay would not be restrained from spoilzie, nor kept under such strict discipline as other regular forces, but he did all that lay in him to keep them back from it, and for bloodshed, if it could have been

thereby prevented, he would rather it had all come out of his own veins."

"Then, falling on the main business, they charged him with breach of Covenant. To which he answered, 'The Covenant which I took I own it and adhere to it. Bishops, I care not for them. I never intended to advance their interest. But when the King had granted you all your desires, and you were every one sitting under his vine and under his fig tree—that then you should have taken a party in England by the hand, and entered into a League and Covenant against the King, was the thing I judged my duty to oppose to the yondmost. That course of theirs,' added the Marquis, 'ended not but in the King's death and overturning the whole of the Government.' When one of the ministers answered, 'that was a sectarian party that rose up and carried things beyond the true and first intent of them,' he said only in reply, 'Error is infinite.'"

"After other discourses, when they were risen and upon their feet to go away, Mr Guthrie said, 'As we were appointed by the Commission of the General Assembly to confer with you, to bring you, if it could be obtained, to some sense of your guilt; so we had, if we had found you penitent, power from the same Commission to release you from that sentence of excommunication under which you lie. But now, since we find it far otherwise with you, and that you maintain your former course, and all these things for which that sentence is passed upon you, we must, with sad hearts, leave you under the same, unto the judgment of the great God, having the fearful apprehension that what is bound on earth, God will bind in Heaven.' To which he replied, 'I am very sorry that any actions of mine should have been offensive to the Church of Scotland, and I would with all my heart be reconciled with the same. But since I cannot obtain it on any other terms—unless I call that my sin which I account to have been my duty—I cannot, for all the reason and conscience in the world.'"

Mr David Dickson argued the same question with Mon-



trose, but he, too, "gained no ground on him." According to M. Graymond, when the ministers accused him of having broken the Covenant, "He cast the accusation back upon them, asserting that they now took his life for no other reason than that he had maintained the principles of the Covenant according to the terms of his oath."

"After the ministers had gone away, and he had been a little alone, he took his breakfast, a little bread dipt in ale. He desired to have a barber to shave him, which was refused him." He had not been allowed the use of a razor, or even of a knife, on the pretence that he might be tempted to destroy himself. When he was told of this restriction he said to his gaoler, "You need not be at so much pains. Before I was taken I had a prospect of this cruel treatment, and if my conscience had allowed me I could have despatched myself."\*

At ten o'clock that morning he was taken to the fine **May 20** Hall of the Parliament House, still in its new glory, close at hand behind St Giles's Cathedral.† There ten years earlier he had stood up among his peers to defend single-handed the weakened fabric of the monarchy against the attacks of those who now triumphantly usurped the authority they had succeeded in displacing. There he was to listen to the sentence which he had already seen, and which had been pronounced upon him, without even the semblance of a trial, the day before he was brought to Edinburgh. Sir James Balfour, the covenanting Lord Lyon, thus describes the scene:—

"The Parliament met about ten o'clock, and immediately after the downsitting, James Graham was brought before them by the magistrates of Edinburgh, and ascended the place of delinquents.

"After the Lord Chancellor had spoken to him, and in a large discourse declared the progress of all his rebellions, he showed him that the House gave him leave to speak for him-

\* Wodrow.

† The interior of the Parliament Hall may still be seen, hardly altered from what it was in Montrose's time, though the frontage has been entirely transformed.

self. Which he did in a long discourse, with all reverence to the Parliament—as he said—since the King and the Commissioners were accorded.

“He pleaded his own innocency by calling all his own depredations, murders, and bloodshed, only diversion of the Scots” nation from interrupting the course of His Majesty’s affairs in England; and as for his last invasion from Orkney, from which, said he, he moved not one foot but by His Majesty’s special direction and command—that, he called, an accelerating the treaty betwixt His Majesty and this nation.\*

“To him the Lord Chancellor replied, punctually proving him, by his acts of hostility, to be a person most infamous, perjured, treacherous, and of all that ever this land brought forth, the most cruel and inhuman butcher of his country; and one who, by his boundless pride, had lost the father, and by his wicked counsels had done what in him lay to destroy the son likewise.

“He made no reply, but was commanded to sit down on his knees and receive his sentence, which he did. Archibald Johnston, the Clerk Register, read it, and the Dempster gave the doom—and immediately rising off his knees without speaking one word, he was removed to the prison.

“He behaved himself all this time in the House,” admits even this hostile chronicler, “with a great deal of courage and modesty, unmoved and undaunted—as appeared—only he sighed two several times, and rolled his eyes amongst all the corners of the House, and, at the reading of the sentence, he lifted up his face, without any word speaking.” “He presented himself in a suit of black cloth with a scarlet coat to his knee, trimmed with silver galoons, lined with crimson tafta, on his head a beaver hat and silver band. He looked somewhat pale, lank-faced and hairy.”

The defence which Sir James Balfour’s report passes over so lightly must not be omitted. It is but just, since Loudon’s

\* Loudon had seen Charles II.’s letters and commission to Montrose, and he therefore knew that every word of this defence was strictly true.



false and abusive charges have received so much credit from some historians, that Montrose should be heard in his own defence. There were only eleven peers in the House, but many of the citizens were present when the Marquis, after listening to the Chancellor's distorted account of his actions, faced his judges with the quiet dignity that distinguished him, and spoke as follows:

"Since you have declared unto me that you have agreed with the King, I look upon you as if His Majesty were sitting among you, and in that relation I appear with this reverence, bareheaded.

"My care hath always been to walk as became a good Christian and a loyal subject. I engaged in the first Covenant and was faithful to it. When I perceived some private persons, under colour of religion, intended to wring the authority from the King and seize on it for themselves, it was thought fit for the clearing of honest men that a bond should be subscribed, wherein the security of religion was sufficiently provided for.

"For the League, I thank God I never was in it and so could not break it. How far religion has been advanced by it, and what sad consequences followed on it, these poor distressed kingdoms can witness. When his late Majesty had, by the blessing of God, almost subdued those rebels that rose against him in England, and that a faction in this kingdom went in to the assistance of the rebels, His Majesty gave Commission to me to come into this kingdom to make a diversion of those forces which were going from this against him. I acknowledged the command most just, and I conceived myself bound in conscience to obey it.

"What my carriage was in this country many of you may bear witness. Disorders in an army cannot be prevented, but they were no sooner known than punished. Never was any man's blood spilt but in battle, and even then, many thousand lives have I preserved. And I dare here avow, in the presence of God, that never a hair of Scotsman's head that I could save fell to the ground.

“And as I came in upon His Majesty’s warrant, so, upon his letters, did I lay aside all interests and retire. And as for my coming at this time, it was by His Majesty’s just commands, in order to the accelerating the treaty betwixt him and you; His Majesty knowing that whenever he had ended with you I was ready to retire upon his call. I may say that never subject acted upon more honourable grounds, nor by so lawful a power, as I did in these services.

“And therefore I desire you to lay aside prejudice, and consider me as a Christian, in relation to the justness of the quarrel, as a subject, in relation to my royal master’s commands, and as your neighbour, in relation to the many of your lives I have preserved in battle. And be not too rash, but let me be judged by the laws of God, the laws of nature and nations, and the laws of this land. If otherwise, I do here appeal from you to the righteous Judge of the world, who one day must be your Judge and mine, and who always gives out righteous judgments.”

This noble and impressive appeal to fact, and to the consciences of his hearers, only elicited from Chancellor Loudon the violent outburst of furious invective recorded by the Lord Lyon. As he left the Parliament House after receiving his sentence, Montrose is said to have quoted an old Scottish saying which affirms that “a messenger should neither be headed nor hanged.” Keenly, however, as he felt the indignity of the sentence upon him, he made no vain supplications for a mode of death more in accordance with his rank and position, but braced himself to a noble endurance, taking to heart the while, the fulness of that consolation which has for nineteen centuries cheered and upheld, under unmerited disgrace and ignominy, so many sufferers of all degrees.

His speech in the Parliament Hall was preserved among the Wigton papers, and the same manuscript relates that “his friends were not suffered to come near him, and a guard was kept in his chamber beside him, so that he had no time or place for his devotions save in their hearing, yet it is acknow-



ledged by all that he rested as kindly those nights, except sometimes when at prayers, as ever they themselves did."

His execution was appointed for the next day, Tuesday, 21st May. This extraordinary haste in hurrying him to the scaffold is explained by a note of Whitlock's, dated 20th May. He there records the receipt of letters from Berwick with the news that "in Scotland Montrose was sentenced to be quartered, and preparations for his execution before they heard from their King or he from them, lest he should intercede for his pardon."

Argyll, who was still the unquestioned head of the Committee of Estates, was well aware that the young King had sanctioned every step that Montrose had taken, and that he was anxious for his safety. There is even good ground for believing that the promise of an indemnity for Montrose, already referred to, had been given to the King by Argyll himself, through his agent, Will Murray. But the promise was made at a time when nothing seemed more improbable than that Montrose should fall into the hands of the Covenanters. When this unexpected event actually happened, Argyll could not resist the temptation to lend a willing ear to the clamours of Archibald Johnston and the party of the Kirk for the blood of James Grahame, and, under shelter of their demands, to satisfy his own vengeance upon the detested enemy who had humiliated him in his own eyes, and in the eyes of his countrymen, and who had more than once made him tremble for his very life.

After Montrose had received his sentence, the Commission of the Kirk sent four ministers, amongst whom this time was Mr Robert Baillie, to go and visit him in the prison. Their chief business was to speak to him "about his soul's condition," and it appears, from the account left by one of the number, that his long-tried patience almost gave way under their repeated exhortations to reconcile himself with the Kirk by confessing "that to be his sin which he considered his duty." They reported that they found him "continuing in

his old pride, and taking very ill what was spoken to him, saying, 'I pray you, gentlemen, let me die in peace!'"

The ministers would not be put off by this gentle appeal, and perhaps to escape from the attacks of all four, Montrose went aside to a corner of the room and spoke a little time with Mr Robert Baillie alone. But as he only expressed penitence for his private sins and shortcomings, and none for the political offences for which alone he was excommunicated, the inquisition, much dissatisfied, returned to report their ill success to the Commission of the Kirk, which forthwith appointed Mr Mungo Law and Mr Robert Traill to attend the prisoner on the scaffold the next day.

The magistrates of Edinburgh were frequently in his cell, and speaking to them in reference to the details of his barbarous sentence, he told them that "he was much beholden to the Parliament for the honour they had done him. 'For,' says he, 'I think it a greater honour to have my head standing on the ports of this town, for this quarrel, than to have my picture in the King's bed-chamber. I am beholden to you that, lest my loyalty should be forgotten, ye have appointed five of the most eminent towns to bear witness of it to posterity.'"

It is said that the last night of his life his rest was much disturbed by Major Weir, the captain of the Town Guard, who treated him with great insolence, and insisted on remaining in the cell "with his lighted tobacco, which he continually smoked, though the Marquis had an aversion to the smell of it above anything in the world."

But the near approach of death lifted Montrose out of the reach of insult and annoyance. His mind dwelt with steadfast hope upon the righteous judgment which would reverse the unjust condemnation passed upon him that day in an earthly court, and upon the blessedness of that eternal kingdom where truth and loyalty have their home, and where the spirit of rebellion can never come. Before he slept that night he gave expression to some of these thoughts by



writing on his prison window, with a diamond in his ring, the following metrical prayer:

“ Let them bestow on every airth \* a limb,  
Then open all my veins that I may swim  
To Thee, my Maker, in that crimson lake,  
Then place my par-boiled head upon a stake,  
Scatter my ashes—strew them in the air—  
Lord ! since Thou know'st where all these atoms are,  
I'm hopeful Thou'lt recover once my dust,  
And confident Thou'lt raise me with the just.”

“ The Marquis took his rest very kindly that night,” says an old pamphlet, and he rose the next morning, refreshed and cheerful, to array himself in the fine linen and rich garments which his friends had provided for him. It had been the habit of his life to concentrate his energy upon the duty of the moment. His one duty now was to die as became a Christian and a gentleman, and no detail that in any way affected that end seemed superfluous. He was combing out the thick wavy locks which he wore in the fashion made familiar to us by Vandyke's pictures, when Sir Archibald Johnston, who had done so much to bring about that day's work, stepped unbidden into the cell. It struck him as singular that a man who was about to suffer what seemed to him a disgraceful and ignominious death, should care to attend to small details of personal comfort or appearance, and he made some impertinent remark upon “ James Grahame's ” occupation. Montrose answered him with a smile, “ While my head is my own I will dress and adorn it, when it becomes yours you can treat it as you please.”

Edinburgh was all astir that day. In the wide open space where stood the Market Cross—scene of many an excited political gathering in which Montrose had taken a prominent part in the early days of the Covenant—a large scaffold breast high had been erected, and upon it the workmen had raised, by the help of machinery, a new gallows thirty feet high. They had worked all night to have it ready, and now it stood out, a huge, threatening shape,

\* “ Airth,” point of the compass. Five of these lines are engraved on Montrose's monument in St Giles.

against the fair blue sky of early summer. Long before the time appointed for the execution a crowd began to gather round this scaffold, and among them—who can doubt it?—were some who, strictly excluded from his prison cell, were come with breaking hearts to have one last look at the well-loved face of the bravest, gentlest, truest-hearted man in all Scotland. There were women like Lady Elizabeth, the wife of the Marquis's nephew, young Napier. She lived with her children in the old Tower of Merchiston, little more than a mile away, and a deed of strange daring was soon to prove her devotion to her hero even after his death. There were others, besides helpless women, who would have risked much for Montrose, and the Covenanters, knowing that he had many friends in Edinburgh, took every precaution to prevent an outbreak of feeling. Trumpets were sounding and drums beating through all the principal streets of the town, and the warlike clangour reached the gloomy chambers of the Tolbooth.

Asking the meaning of the familiar sounds, Montrose was told that the soldiers were being called to arms by order of the Parliament to guard against any tumult or attempt at a rescue on the part of the "malignants." "Am I still a terror to these good people now that I am to die?" asked the Marquis. "Let them look to themselves, for my memory will trouble their conscience, and when I am dead I shall be more formidable to them than when I was alive!" Ten years later some of the Covenanters had cause to remember this saying. There can be little doubt that vengeance for the murder of Montrose, played a chief part in bringing both Argyll and Archibald Johnston to the scaffold.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the great iron door of the Tolbooth was thrown open, and Montrose was led out by the bailiffs, "clad in the same rich mantle he had worn before, a scarlet coat laid over with silver lace, his bands and cuffs exceeding rich, his delicate white gloves on his hands, his stockings of incarnate silk, his shoes with their ribbons on his feet." \* He went on foot along the High Street to the place

\* Diary of John Nichols, the notary public.



of execution, carrying his hat in his hand, for he was not allowed to be covered, and the impression made upon the bystanders during his short passage through the crowded street is thus described by the sympathizing author of *Montrose Redivivus* :—

“ He stept along the street with so great state, and there appeared in his countenance so much beauty, majesty and gravity, as amazed the beholders. And many of his enemies did acknowledge him to be the bravest subject in the world, and in him a gallantry that graced all the crowd, more be-seeming a monarch than a mere peer.”

Even upon the scaffold none of his friends were allowed to attend him, but they privately sent a boy—Robert Gordon of Cluny—to take down his last words in shorthand. He was not permitted to address the people, but he spoke at some length in answer to questions put to him by the magistrates and other bystanders. The absence, in the report, of these questions necessarily gives to Montrose’s words a want of sequence.

“ I am sorry,” he said, “ if this manner of my end be scandalous to any good Christian here. Doth it not often happen to the righteous according to the way of the un-righteous? Doth not sometimes a just man perish in his righteousness, and a wicked man prosper in his wickedness and malice? They who know me should not disesteem me for this. Many greater than I have been dealt with in this kind. But I must not say but that all God’s judgments are just. And this measure for my private sins I acknowledge to be just with God. I wholly submit myself to Him. But in regard of man, I may say they are but instruments. God forgive them, and I forgive them. They have oppressed the poor, and violently perverted judgment and justice. But He that is higher than they, will reward them.

“ What I did in this kingdom was in obedience to the most just commands of my Sovereign; and in his defence in the day of his distress against those who rose up against him.

"I acknowledge nothing; but fear God and honour the King, according to the commandments of God, and the just laws of nature and nations. And I have not sinned against man, but against God, and with Him there is mercy which is the ground of my drawing near unto Him.

"It is objected against me by many, even good people, that I am under the censure of the Church. This is not my fault, seeing it is only for doing my duty by obeying my Prince's most just commands, for religion, his sacred person, and authority. Yet I am sorry they did excommunicate me, and in that which is according to God's laws, without wronging my conscience or allegiance, I desire to be relaxed. If they will not do it, I appeal to God, who is the righteous Judge of the world, and who must and will, I hope, be my Judge and Saviour.

"It is spoken of me that I would blame the King. God forbid. For the late King, he lived a saint and died a martyr. I pray God I may end as he did. If ever I would wish my soul in another man's stead, it should be in his. For His Majesty now living, never any people, I believe, might be more happy in a King. His commands to me were most just, and I obeyed them. I pray God he be so dealt withal that he be not betrayed under trust as his father was.

"I desire not to be mistaken; as if my carriage at this time, in relation to your ways, were stubborn. I do but follow the light of my conscience, my rule, which is seconded by the working of the spirit of God that is within me.

"I thank Him I go to Heaven with joy the way He paved for me. If He enable me against the fear of death, and furnish me with courage and confidence to embrace it even in its most ugly shape, let God be glorified in my end, though it were in my damnation. Yet I say not this out of any fear or distrust, but out of my duty to God, and love to His people.

"I have no more to say but that I desire your charity and your prayers. And I shall pray for you all. I leave my soul to God, my service to my Prince, my good-will to my friends,



my love and charity to you all. And thus briefly I have exonerated my conscience."

The ministers, Robert Traill and Mungo Law, two of those who were most bitter against him, were on the scaffold, but one of them records that "he did not even look toward the place where they stood." When he had finished speaking he stood for a few minutes a little apart, with his face in his hands, engaged in private prayer, having declined to make the long public prayer which was frequently offered on an occasion of this kind. Dr Wishart's *History of his Wars*—written in Latin—and a copy of his own last Declaration were then tied round his neck with a cord. He smiled at this supposed indignity, and assisted the hangman to arrange the cord, adding that he had not felt himself more honoured when the King had sent him the golden chain and ribbon of the Garter than by the books they now hung round his neck. He submitted without complaint to having his arms tied, and went up the ladder, "to the top of that prodigious gibbet," "in a very stately manner," as one of the unfriendly ministers reported. His last words were, "God have mercy upon this afflicted kingdom."

Among the spectators of the tragedy was an Englishman, who wrote an account to the English Parliament of the whole proceedings. He writes hurriedly: "What with the early going away of the post, and what with the hubbub we are in, Montrose being now on the scaffold, I must cut short." He then gives a rapid but impressive account of Montrose's entry into Edinburgh, and his defence before the Parliament. Then, after giving the sentence in full, he concludes thus:

"All the time when the sentence was being given, and also when he was executed, he seemed no way to be altered, or his spirit moved, but his speech was full of composure, and his carriage as sweet as ever I saw in a man in all my days. When they bid him kneel, he told them he would. He was willing to observe any posture that might manifest his obedience, especially to them who were so near conjunction with his master. It is absolutely believed that he hath overcome

more men by his death, in Scotland, than he would have done if he had lived. For I never saw a more sweeter carriage in a man in all my life.

"I should write more largely if I had time, but he is just now a turning off from the ladder, but his countenance changes not. But the rest that came in with him on Saturday are in great fear . . . the King is expected daily. The Parliament and Kirk do conceive that if he doth not speedily come in, his ground of coming was rather upon Montrose's score than his agreement with them. The event of these things will suddenly be known."

The details of Montrose's sentence were fully carried out, and the mutilated body was thrown into a short chest and buried amongst malefactors under the common gallows in the Boroughmuir.

It was reported that Argyll, who refrained from showing himself at the execution, wept at the rehearsal of Montrose's death. "Howsoever," says an old writer, "they were by many called crocodile's tears, how worthily I leave to other's judgment."

Fraser,\* who recorded every step of the Marquis from the time that he joined the procession of prisoners at Lovat, ends his account thus: "I saw his arm upon the Justice port of Aberdeen, another on the south port of Dundee; his head upon the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. Also I saw it taken down and—Argyll's head put up in the place of it."

\* For the parts of the narrative given by Fraser (Wardlaw MS.), for which he was indebted to the author of the *Montrose Redivivus* (also drawn on verbatim by Heath), see *Deeds of Montrose*, p. 319, and notes.



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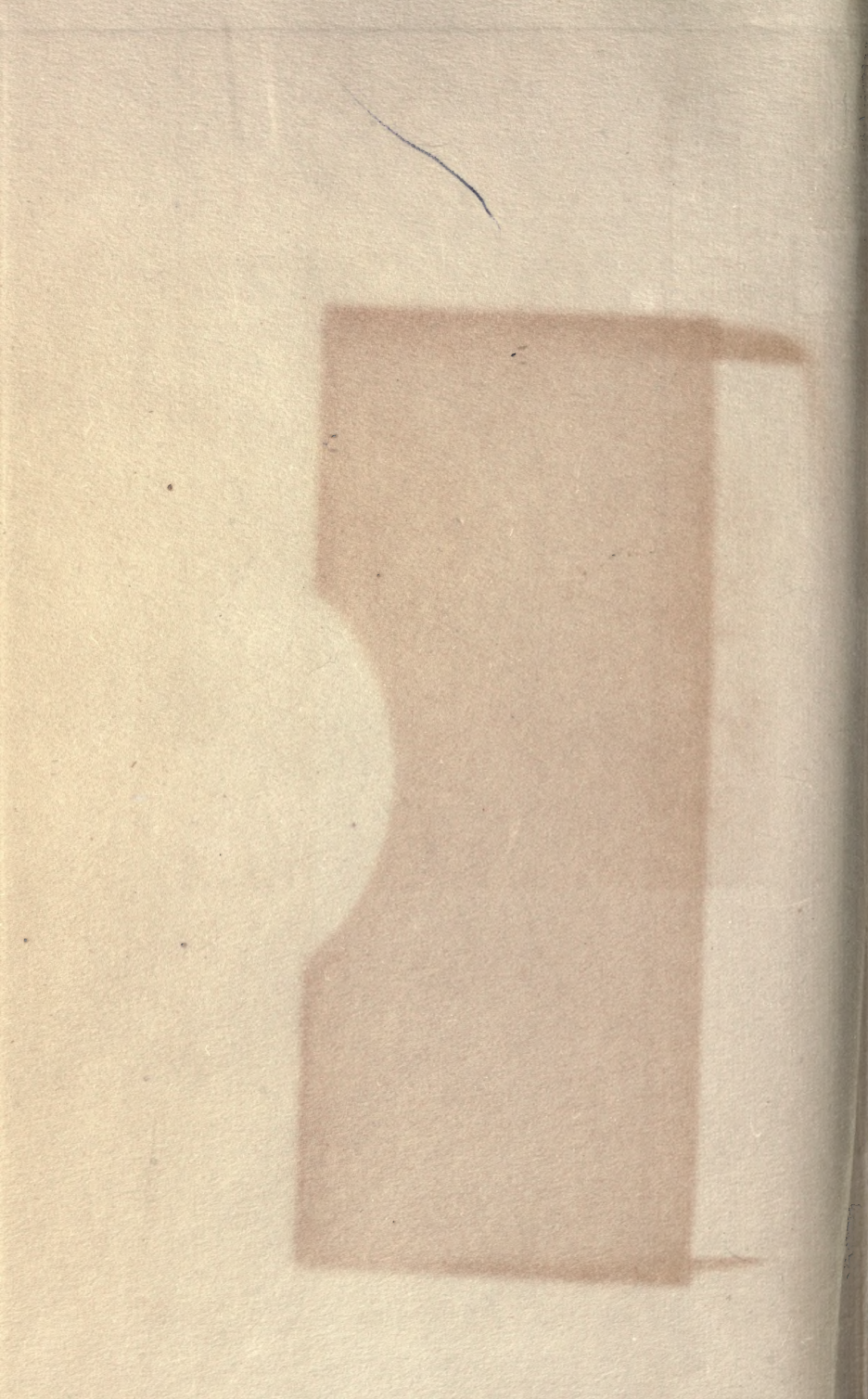


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Pryce, (Mrs.) Hugh  
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